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The Fragmentation of the Ulster Unionist Party

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The Fragmentation of the Ulster Unionist Party

(TITLE)

BY

Declan Lawson George Hall

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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In 1973, the Ulster Unionist Party fragmented after fifty years as the dominant party within Northern Ireland. However, this fragmentation did not simply occur in reaction to the events of the 1960's and early 1970's. It was a long ongoing process that can be traced back to the 1940's and 1950's.

This study is concerned with the splintering of the Ulster Unionist Party and the reasons that lay behind the division. The first contention in this thesis is that the Ulster Unionist Party was never the single united political party that it was often supposed to have been. It was a localized party designed to organize a localized State; supported by a cross-class alliance of voters; thus reflecting the inherent divisions and contradictions that this type of party inherently must contain. In fact, the leadership have always had to work hard to maintain unity and therefore political dominance. The only issue all Unionists were agreed upon was the Constitutional one i.e. Northern Ireland was to remain an integral part of the United Kingdon.

This leads to the central point of the thesis; which is that the fragmentation of the Ulster Unionists is not merely the result of the current "troubles" in Northern Ireland. It is argued here that the root causes of the division of the Ulster Unionist Party are located in the Socio-economic changes that occupied in Northern Ireland in the post-World War II era.

The Ulster Unionist Party as the defender of the interests of local capital and Protestant supremacy increasingly found itself at odds with much of its support.

Northern Ireland was integrated into the wider international market economy with the demise of the traditional local industries such as shipbuilding, textiles, and agriculture. The Unionist government was forced to play

a greater role in the economy of the state, introducing economic planning and centralization. This meant the Ulster Unionist Party at the local level lost its room to manoever and increasingly lots of its power. This was compounded with the introduction of the Westminster controlled Welfare State, which integrated the Catholics into the Northern Irish State, as least at the economic level.

The Ulster Unionist Party as the defender of local bourgeois interests and Protestant Supremacy increasingly found itself acting as an agent for international capital and the integration of Catholics into the economic Sphere of the State. However, the Ulster Unionist Party tried to do it in such a way so not to threaten the political power of the Protestants; thus maintaining a "Protestant State for a Protestant people".

Increasingly this caused problems. Many Unionists at the local level were becoming alienated with the Unionist government at Storemont. At the same time most Catholics were not really getting all the economic benefits they had hoped for, while at the political level, they were still discriminated against. As a result the Civil Rights Movement arose. The Ulster Unionist Party was unable to cope with the Civil Rights demands partly because it feared alienating any further the support of hard-line and local Protestants and partly because the party was not organized to allow full Catholic particiaption in the political life of the State. One of its main functions was to ensure that Catholics did not threated Protestant Supremacy.

It is in this period of the 1960's and early 1970's that the inherent divisions of a cross-class party finally became apparent. The Ulster Unionist Party finally did break-up over the political issues of law and order, Direct Role and power-sharing. But these political divisions cannot be seen in a vacuum. The Socio-economic conditions

of Northern Ireland had changed, without corresponding political changes. Greater Catholic integration into the Northern Irish State at the economic and Social level, demanded greater political integration. The Ulster Unionist Party adapted to the Socio-economic change as best it could without trying to change the basic political nature of the State, but it was not enough.

When Socio-economic change occurs there must be corresponding political change. The Ulster Unionist Party could not act as an agent for this change, as it was not designed to. When the British government intervened to act as the agent of change the Ulster Unionist Party lost its raison d' etre, causing a realignment in Unionist politics. The party had little choicebut to fragment and adapt to the new political situation in Northern Ireland.

THE FRAGMENTATION OF THE ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY 1945-1973

BY

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the fragmentation of Ulster Unionism, in particular the splintering of the Ulster Unionist Party between the Northern Ireland Stormont elections of 1969 and the Assembly elections of 1973, and the reasons behind the dissension of these years. The elections for the Stormont Parliament in 1969 seemed to be the last time that the old Unionist Party 'block' dominated and controlled any Northern Irish elected body for by 1973 the Party had literally fallen apart. For the first time in Ulster's history the Unionist Party did not achieve an outright majority of seats in a province-wide election, having to share with a number of other Unionist Parties.

My central hypothesis is that the Ulster Unionist Party did not break up simply because of it's failure to cope with the Civil Rights Movement and ensuing problem of "law and order". Indeed, I hope to show that the Unionist Party was prone to internal dissent inherently due to its alliance of many different and contradictory tendancies around the single issue of the Union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Unionist Party was always a loosely organised Party with a factitious nature, never the monolithic block it was often supposed to be. Unionist leadership was always conscious of the need to work at and maintain unity.

The main variables affecting the break-up of the Unionist Party were primarily social and economic policies in the post-1945 period. Civil Rights, the problem of law and order and British intervention are all very important variables affecting Unionist fragmentation. However, it is my contention that the social and economic policies prior to these events affected the logic of the Northern Irish state and its continued existence in its old form and therefore the logic

of the Unionist Party itself as the overseer of the old Northern Irish state. This created deep divisions within the Unionist Party which only came to the surface in the late 1960's with the advent of the Civil Rights Movement, communal violence and increased British invervention; all of which were largely the result of the afore-mentioned social and economic changes.

In the first chapter, the actual elections of 1969 will be compared to that of 1973, so to be able to examine the actual fragmentation of the Unionist Party in the 1960's, when its composition did not lend itself to the demands of a largely socialised, planned economy and complex society in Ulster.

The Ulster Unionists eventually broke up over a whole series of policies. No one single situation or policy can be pointed out as the determinant of the fragmentation of the Ulster Unionist Party; it was very much an ongoing process. The second chapter will be looking at the Unionist economic policies of the 1950's and 1960's such as the introduction of economic planning and regulation and the necessity for increased state invervention, which caused much dissension at the local level. The third chapter will concentrate upon social policies within Northern Ireland during the same period. Primarily, this will examine the introduction of the Welfare State, National Health Service, free education and the provision of public housing. It is the contention here that the Unionist Party became outmoded, with Northern Ireland becoming integrated into the larger international capitalist economy as a consequence of their economic policies, which were complimented by their social policies and the rise of the Welfare State. The Unionist Party at Stormont were forced to concentrate economic power increasingly in their hands and take overall

responsibility for many different aspects of people's lives. The Unionist Party was not organised nor equipped to run this type of state upon liberal-democratic lines. Consequently, the Unionists became divided (but not split) as well as outmoded, over the nature and acceptability of these developments.

The fourth chapter will examine the rise of the Civil Rights Movement, their demands and actions, and how the Unionists were unable to cope with the situation politically. Catholic demands for Civil Rights were only logical, in light of preceeding social and economic developments in Northern Ireland. However, this only led to a law and order problem, and the rise of violence in light of the Unionists inability to cope with the challenge of Civil Rights. The Unionists tried to stop Civil Rights demonstrations by the use of police and heavy-handed tactics, which only turned many Catholics to counter-violence. Again, the Unionist Party was further divided over how to cope with an increasingly agitated Catholic minority and very often reactive Protestant working class. The fifth chapter will look at the impact of Direct Rule and the White Paper of 1973. It was this final British take over which completed a process whereby the Unionist Party was becoming outmoded and causing the actual split in the party prior to the 1973 elections.

Party Development

Though the Alliance Party and the Northern Irish Labour Party (NILP) were strictly speaking Unionist Parties in the sense that they supported the Union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; they have been largely excluded from this analysis (except where they directly affect the Unionist Party) because they have always represented the

centre within Ulster politics. As such, their commitment to Unionism was always open to re-evaluation and therefore they were never regarded as being part of mainstream Unionism. In addition, there will not be an examination of the role of the extra-parlimentary Unionist groups, such as the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) or Orange Institution in any great detail. Though many of these groups are of importance they will only be discussed as they relate to the fragmentation of the Unionist Party and the Unionist monopoly of State power. As was stated earlier, the main thrust of this thesis is to examine the actual division of the Unionist Party and how this was affected by policies and developments from 1945 to 1973.

It can be stated, as a general theory about party development, that political parties break up over general political issues, and how they should be resolved. However, this is only a reflection of fundamental differences on a whole range of basic socio-economic issues. As Kirchheimer points out many of the old bourgeois parties in Western Europe fragmented or were superceded because they were not able to face up to the changing circumstances or the "laws of the political market". (Kirchheimer:166:183). Political division do not arise in a vacum, they occur due to a qualitative change in the conditions of society.

Almond argues that political parties serve a number of functions such as socialisation, interest articulation, political communication etc and when they no longer serve these functions because they have not or cannot adapt to changes then the party declines or falls apart. (Almond:1960:26-57). Though there is not really any literature which pertains directly to this paper's main hypothesis, which is that social and economic changes were the underlying cause of Unionist

fragmentation, many authors do agree that changing economic and social conditions do affect Party development as much as direct political issues. As La Palombara and Weiner state "the historical graveyards are cluttered with parties which dominated the political scene but subsequently failed to adopt to new circumstances and therefore died, were absorbed by new active movements or whithered into small marginal parties". (La Palombara and Weiner:1966:7). Even functionalists such as La Palombara and Weiner concede that political parties can be viewed as "the culmination ..... of processes of social, economic and political change". (La Palombara and Weiner:1966:41).

The Unionist Party was able to cope with the IRA, British meddling and demands for Civil Rights from the Catholic minority prior to the Second World War. However, by the 1960's the socio-economic conditions of society within Ulster had changed. Catholics were increasingly integrated into society. Power (as an agent of British economic and social policies) was increasingly centralised therefore breaking down local Unionist arrangements so that the traditional methods of meeting perceived threats and challenges to the Unionist monopoly of state power were no longer applicable. The Unionist Party did not adapt to the new circumstances successfully. As Epstein points out, political parties are "dependant in the sense of being determined in their type and form by basic national circumstances". (Epstein:1980: 8). The Unionist Party was organised to run an autonomous sectarian state; it grew out of the existence of Ulster. When that Ulster changed it necessated changes within the party and how it ran the state; these changes could not be successfully accommodated in the long run.

Methodology

Obviously it is difficult to look at everything in this period and analyse effects upon Ulster Unionism. The policies examined (the ones mentioned previously) are those that are of the most general importance to the situation in Northern Ireland as it relates to the Unionist Party and Unionism in general. If any of these policies caused a change in the material conditions of society to such an extent that the Unionist Party had to make changes in how it operated or functioned, and as a result causing dissension or contradictions within the Unionist Party, then they will be considered to have had an independant affect upon the Ulster Unionist Party and Unionism as a whole. For example, the Civil Rights and the Unionists handling of the situation caused changes within Ulster, forcing the Party to make reforms causing dissent. Therefore the Civil Rights movement did have an independant effect upon the Unionist Party. In other words, if any of the policies or conditions analysed have caused inter-Unionist dissension, then they had an independant effect.

The method of investigation used will be one of logical analysis, based tentatively within the Marxian tradition, However, this is not to say that the information presented and used here is necessarily of a highly selective nature. Indeed, much non-Marxist information has been used. Most of the information used is taken from books and articles. Lack of literature dealing specifically with the Ulster Unionist Party and the reasons behind its fragmentation has been a problem. However, this problem has largely been overcome through extensive reading on Ulster and a process of picking out the relevant sections.

There a a good many works covering the period as a whole, such as Buckland (1981). He provides a detailed historical analysis of Ulster politics from 1921 to the late 1970's. Probert (1978) deals specifically with the role of the state from 1921 to 1974 and the Ulster Workers' Strike, giving pride of place to the entry of monopoly capital as the main cause of Unionist fragmentation; this is largely supported by Farrell (1976) and McCann (1974). Though Probert does not tend to treat Unionism as a monolithic whole, both Farrell and McCann do tend to see Unionism as such, mainly held together by the Orange Institution (Farrell:1976:327). Harbinson (1973) gives a detailed account of the Unionist Party's formal organisation and structural divisions, emphasising its inherently divided nature. But even he argues that all Unionists of whatever Party or class would not do anything to endanger the Union or go too far in regards to class politics. (Harbinson:1973: 213). Devlin (1969) has written a highly personal account of her role within the Civil Rights Movement and sees Civil Rights as the wedge which split the Unionists. Others such as Bew, Gibbon and Patterson (1979) see the power struggle within the Unionist camp itself as the major facture in explaining the splintering.

Much of the pre-mid-1970's literature does view the Unionist Party as being very united and cohesive. Wallace (1971) argues that whilst the Unionist government was always sensitive to criticism from the right-wing of the Party, Unionism and the Unionist Party maintained an uncompromising attitude and stood in a solid block in its dislike of Catholicism, Eire and Republicanism. (Wallace:1974:69-70). A much later work by McAlister (1983) carries on the notion that the Unionists were monolithic. He argues that despite potential divisions be being a class alliance, the Unionist Party managed to avoid them;

being wholly united in a single issue. (McAlister:1983;65). As was already pointed out this argument was supported in varying degrees by Devlin (1969), McCann (1974) and Farrell (1976). Evidence in the next chapter will help refute the notion of the monolithic Unionist Party.

This is not to deny that political parties have an independant effect in that they can act as agents for political change. (Epstein:1980:8). The Unionist Party did have a considerable effect as an agent of change within Ulster over the years. However, as Marx stated, "Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life". (Marx: 1974:47). In other words the material conditions of society have a determining effect upon the political forms that exist, and when the material conditions change, ie, the substructure, so will the superstructure to accommodate that change. The Unionist Party realised that there were certain changes which they could not resist so they tried to adapt them to the sectarian situation of Ulster, without changing themselves or the nature of the state too much. In this they were unsuccessful, leading to the downfall of the Stormont regime and splintering of the Party.

It is not the aim here to propose any solution to the problems faced in Northern Ireland or even talk about the effects of the political impasse; it is simply to understand what has happened in this period, vis-a-vis the Unionists and their party. All too often their central role in creating and shaping the present situation in Ulster is treated superficially as a collection of reactionaries being intransigent in the face of social-domocratic reformism. As Michel argues; "Precise diagnosis is the logical and indispensible prelininary to any possible prognosis". (Michel:1958:6). Some Unionists did approve change, others did not. What is important is to

understand the nature of these changes within Ulster and how they affected the Party and how the Party dealt with it.

Other work which does highlight the factitous nature of Unionism is O'Dowd, Rolston and Tomlinson (1980) who provide an analysis of the role of the British government and the demands of the modern capitalist economy in bringing down Unionism and the Unionist Party; emphasising that the class alliance was always a difficult one to maintain. Bell (1978), Nelson (1974) and Wright (1973) all provide analytical accounts of Protestant and Unionist "ideologies". Both Nelson and Wright emphasise the reasons why Protestants perceived reform and Catholic integration as a threat thereby to Catholic demands and those who oppose anything to do with them; with a alienated Protestant working-class becoming increasingly desillusioned. Finally, there is O'Neill (1969) Prime Minister and leader of the Unionist Party throughout much of the 1960's. He spends much time explaining and justifying his policies and is a good example of blaming fragmentation simply upon those within Unionism who opposed reform and the right of the British to make demands upon the Unionists. (O'Neill:1969).

CHAPTER 2

THE ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY

This chapter will examine briefly the organisation and structure of the Unionist Party and its fissiparous nature. The Party was always prone to splits and fractures with much internal dissent because the Unionist Party is essentially an alliance, cutting across class lines. Unionist leaders have had to constantly work to maintain all Unionists united under the one Party, the working-class Unionists often wanting different government action than landed Unionists. (Rose:1971:224). It is important to emphasise that the Unionists have always been vulnerable to factional disputes and breakaway groups, because a great deal of the literature assumes that the pre-O'Neill era, ie pre-1963 was one of Unionist harmony and unity. In addition to looking at the nature of the Party, this chapter will also present the results of the 1969 Stormont elections and the 1974 Assembly elections to highlight the actual fragmentation of the Party and growth of other Unionist Parties.

Organisation of the Unionist Party and its Fissiparous Tendancies

The Ulster Unionist Party was formed on the 3 March 1905, arising out of the old Irish Unionist Party, once the Unionists of Ulster realised they would have a better chance of keeping a Protestant Ulster British, rather than a Catholic Ireland. It was organised and run very much local lines, its many different parts being largely autonomous. The main organisational unit for the Party at large is the local constituency association. These constituency associations had a great deal of local autonomy, selecting local candidates and national candidates, traditionally with little interference from central office or Party leadership. The local Party run local government with its relatively wide powers over housing, public jobs, health care etc. This autonomy allowed the Party to take on a different character

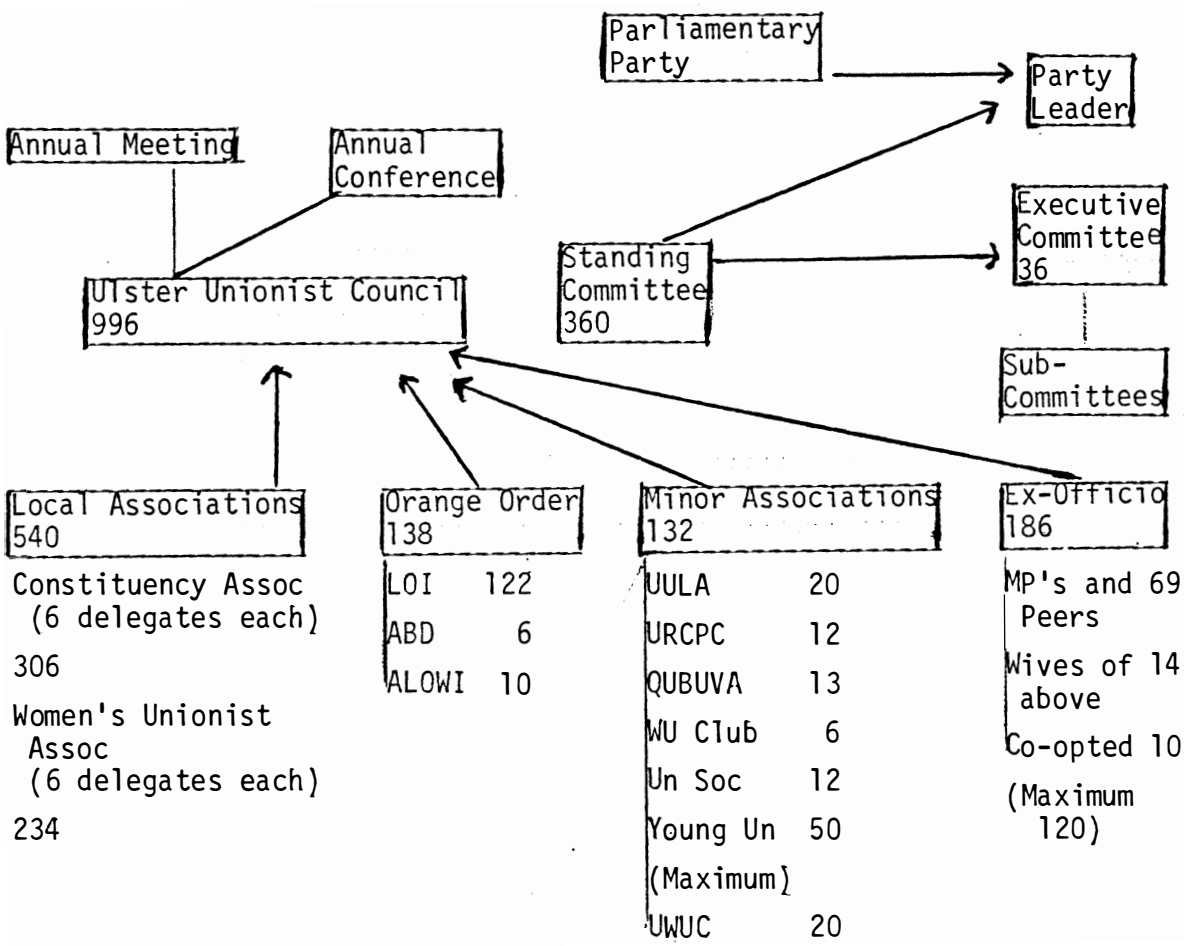
depending upon the location, not having to stick to a central line and, therefore, helping to contain the many different interests within the Party. (Arthur:1980:65).

The central body within the Party was the Ulster Unionist Council (UUC). This had little control over policy, which was usually decided by the Parliamentary Party (often in reaction to developments within the United Kingdom). Its main purpose was to integrate and co-ordinate the various affiliated organisations in the Province, make sure all local constituencies and often affiliated organisations were clear on election strategies, general policy, help the Orange Order gain access to Unionist politicans. The UUC is the body that effectively represents the mass of the Party in the country, its day-to-day work being done largely by an executive committee. (Harbinson:1973:84).

As can be seen from Table 1, the Unionist Party as a whole consisted of many different parts, from the Association of Local Orange Women in Ireland to the Parliamentary Party. The particular function and relevance of each part is not really necessary to understand. What is important to understand is that the Unionist Party as a whole was made up of many autonomous parts, all providing structural tensions within the Party, all looking out for their own particular interests. For instance, the Parliamentary Party was primarily interested in maintaining unity for electoral purposes, as well as to face the political problems of running the government, whilst the Orange Order was concerned with ensuring the supremacy of the Protestant faith both within the Party and State. The local Party in West Belfast may have been more concerned with unemployment and the local Party in the West of Ulster with maintaining agricultural prices. (Harbinson:1973:113).

TABLE 1

THE ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY



(Figures taken from Harbinson:1973:40)

LOI	Loyal Orange Institution
ABD	Apprentice Boys of Derry
ALOWI	Association of Loyal Orange Women in Ireland
UULA	Ulster Unionist Labour Association
URCPC	Ulster Reform Club Political Committee
QUBUVA	Queen's University of Belfast Unionist Voter's Association
WU	Willowfield Unionist Club
Un Society	The Unionist Society
UWUC	Ulster Women's Unionist Council

The main reason the Unionist Party was able to retain this broad alliance was due to the nature of the State. Northern Ireland was an integral part of the United Kingdom yet with its own devolved government located at Stormont Castle. The Westminster government was responsible primarily for Ulster's external defence and external affairs. It had ultimate authority over all affairs internal and paid for a large proportion of Northern Ireland's services and building and maintenace of its infrastructure, but it in effect left the Unionists to implement British policies as they would. Of course, the Unionists were increasingly left with little room for maneouvre in terms of social policies and welfare, with the British government laying down strict guidelines on who should receive what.

There were important differences however, such as that voting for Stormont was different from voting for the Westminster Parliament, since Northern Ireland allowed for plural voting and disfranchisement on the grounds of property. There was a business vote which could be exercised in a Stormont election, in addition to the residential vote, by a person who occupied business premises in a constituency to the rateable value of ten pounds (approximately fourteen dollars) or more per annum. There was also a graduates vote for four seats representing the Queen's University of Belfast. This had obvious implications: the business and graduate vote tended to give extra votes to Unionism, since the business, professional and educated classes in Ulster were predominately Protestant and therefore Unionist. In addition, all householders were not allowed to vote. Again this affected the Catholics mostly, as there was more of a tendancy for Catholics to live with friends, in parents' house, rooms or lodgings. (Wallace: 1970:Chapter 1).

The most obvious opportunity for manipulating the electoral system was to draft local government constituency boundaries through the process of gerrymandering, ie fix electoral boundaries so that Protestant majorities were safe. If a Catholic majority occurred, it was made huge and included as many Catholics in a 'lost' division as possible. It was in local government with their special importance for schools, housing, public jobs, etc that opportunities for manipulation through property qualifications, plural votes and gerrymandering were fully and seriously exploited. The Unionists had an inbuilt majority of 2:1 at Stormont as sixty-six per cent of the population were Protestant. But they also controlled most local Councils even in many parts of the West where Protestants were clearly outnumbered. Local governments with relative freedom over the allocation of public jobs and housing used their power to ensure Catholics remained in their electoral ghettos and loyal Protestants received just rewards. In addition, local government had full control over police and law and order, and they ensured that a Protestant Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) enforced the rules of a Protestant State. (O'Dowd et al:1980: 97). This type of political autonomy helped maintain unity. The Party was able to adapt itself to local conditions and carry out and implement policies suited to their particular conditions without too much interference from Stormont, let alone Westminster.

Orginally the strategic objectives of the Unionist Party and its leaders were: first, the six counties of Northern Ireland should be prevented from falling under southern (Dublin government) control second, the greatest possible degree of autonomy from London should be secured, since the British had historically proved to be unreliable; third, the unity of the Unionist alliance of classes should be maintained at all costs. However, as the threat of republicanism

waned after the early 1920's, the leaders of Unionism had to work more and more upon securing Unionist unity. (Bew, Gibbon and Patterson:1980:156). The principle weapon used was that of sectarianism, portraying all Catholics as traitors who were waiting for the first opportunity to integrate Ulster into the Irish Republic, and impose "Rome Rule". Protestant fears and loyalties were reinforced by local government authorities maintaining segregation through education and housing policies. Catholics attended Catholic schools and were kept in Catholic ghettos. Protestants enjoyed marginally higher standards of living through being allocated more and better public jobs and houses. This was reinforced through the informal contacts within the Orange Order; in which Protestants of all social classes would be together in district lodges.

The Unionist Party was relatively successful in maintaining their organisational and electoral unity across class lines. This unity of the Protestant working and middle classes in supporting the Unionist Party was necessary to maintain Unionist control of Ulster; Without support of the Protestant working class they could never have hoped to run Northern Ireland. At the same time the Party leadership was careful not to impose itself too much upon the Party as a whole, for fear of alienating working class support. Thus for the sake of unity, the Parliamentary Party was often forced to support employment schemes that were anathema to many of their number. In addition, this helped to stave off consistent challenges from break-away groups and other Unionist Parties as well as contain inherent contradictions. (Probert:1978:82).

On the other hand, these break-away factions and independent Unionists show that the Unionist alliance was not as united and monolithic as is

often supposed by authors such as Wallace (1971), Devlin (1969) or De Paor (1971). Prior to the Second World War the biggest electoral challenge to the Unionist Party was not the Nationalist Party but the Progressive Unionist Party. This Party was formed in 1937 by Unionist Party members and a handful of Unionist MP's at Stormont, all mostly from west Belfast. They wanted more emphasising by government on the problems of jobs and housing. This opposition was effectively crushed by the banging of the sectarian drum. The Free State government in Southern Ireland under a new hard-line republican Prime Minister Eammon De'Valera, proclaimed in December 1937 a new constitution, claiming the whole island of Ireland as national territory. In effect, he was reasserting the southern government's claim over the northern six counties. Lord Craigavon, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland (and therefore leader of the Unionist Party) seized the opportunity eagerly. He called an election for Stormont, playing upon the issue of the maintenance of the border and rejection of the claims of De'Valera, whilst at the same time enabling the Unionist to denounce the Progressive Unionist as 'wreckers' and 'traitors'. As Harbinson succinctly puts it "just as the sensational novelists of the early nineteenth century introduced apparitions to deter their charactors from rash or criminal enterprises, so the invocation of political phantoms was expected to deter Protestant voters from supporting Unionist dissidents". (Harbinson:1973:221).

Dissent has largely been contained through playing upon sectarian fears, but it has not always stopped individual Unionists from presenting challenges from outside the Party. A typical case is that of T. Henderson, a housepainter who was elected to Stormont to represent the Shankill ward between 1925 and 1953. Henderson disliked the upper-class influence upon the Party and advocated socialist

policies within a Unionist context. The Shankill was (and still is) solidly Protestant and working class and traditionally Unionist, but Unionist with a social emphasis. The Unionist Party has always been able to tolerate the odd dissenter, only when they transform themselves into a political Party do they get worried as in 1938. (Wallace:1970:69).

There has always been a challenge to Official Unionism from the right. The Rev Dr Ian Richard Kyle Paisley and his Democratic Unionist Party is but one of a long list of hardline Protestant Unionists. Prior to the actual setting up of the Northern Irish State in 1921 there was the Belfast Protestant Association who worked politically to secure the nomination of 'good' Protestant candidates in Belfast Corporation elections. In the 1920's and 1930's there was the Ulster Protestant League, in the 1950's there was Ulster Protestant Action and in the 1960's Paisley's Protestant Unionist Party, all of which put up individual candidates at local and Stormont elections. Their political platforms invariably centered around Protestant fundamentalism and fear of the relative 'softness' of traditional Unionism. This fear stems from the traditional domination of Unionism "by the upper-class which it fears might place its own economic interests above those of the ordinary people of Ulster and sell the Union if the price was right". (Hardbinson:1973:225).

The threat to Official Unionism from the left, after 1945, came primarily from the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NICP). Never an exclusively Protestant Party or steadfastly Unionist, it did on the whole come out in favour of the Union. If put forward in the 1950's and 1960's a series of reformist policies which particularly appealed to the working class Protestants of the industrialised east, espeically

in North, West and East Belfast, Larne, Portadown, Carrickfergus and Lurgan. The NILP enjoyed a certain measure of success and in the early 1960's got the Unionist Party quite worried. Due to changes in the post-war economy and the introduction of the Welfare State the Unionist Party was unable to rely totally upon its sectarian appeal to combat the NILP. The Unionist Party was forced to 'outdo' the NILP. (See Chapter 3).

As can be seen by looking at Table 2 the political unity of the Unionists fell apart between the years of 1969 and 1973. From this observation it would seem that events between these years must have caused the fragmentation of the Party. This is only partly true; the culmination of the Civil Rights Campaign, Unionist handling of law and order, the rise of violence and direct rule are all events which happened in this period and are crucial to the splintering of the Party; but it does go back further than that; to the changing nature of the state (which will be discussed in the next two chapters).

Briefly, with the accession of Terence O'Neill as Ulster's Prime Minister and Unionist Party leader in 1963, there was a change in tyle and emphasis of the Party. A change which had been slowly growing in the 1960's. O'Neill was faced with challenges from the NILP and the need to increasingly intervene in economic and social life; and he hoped to do this without upsetting the fragile unity of his Party. Previously the Party was helped in maintaining unity by never really having to go beyond the constitutional issue. The Unionist Party's lack of concrete social and economic policies at least until the 1960's can be highlighted by looking at a statement of policies issued by the executive committee of the UUC in November 1959. It states "First, to maintain the constitutional

TABLE 2

THE 1969 STORMONT AND 1973 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

1969 Stormont Election

Party	Proportion of Votes (per cent)	Proportion of Seats (per cent)
Unionist Party	48	69
Independent Unionist	19	6
Total Unionist	67	75

1973 Assembly Election

Party		
VULC	10	9
DULC	11	10
AWPU	8	10
WBLC	2	4
Official Unionist	29	31
Total Unionist	61	64
Alliance	9	10
NICP	3	1
SDLP	22	24
Nationalist	3	0
	37	35

(Results from Laver:1976:14 and 34)

position of Northern Ireland as an integral part of the Unionist Kingdom and to defend the principles of civil and religious liberty. Second, to improve social standards and to expand industry and agriculture. Third, to welcome to our ranks only those who unconditionally support these ideas". (Harbinson:1973:44). Even as late as 1971, Rose contended that the Unionist Party were essentially a single claim Party, advancing no distinctive principles or programmes other than that of continued union with Britain. (Rose: 1971:223).

Idealogically, the Unionist Party would be classified as conservative Unionist. MP's at Westminster always followed the conservative Party whip, and there was always a general acceptance of capitalism even by the reformist elements within the Party. However, the Party was relatively flexible, as seen by looking at its implementation of economic and social policies. It had to be; if a labour Westminster government introduced welfarism; the Unionist Party had little choice but to implement those policies within Northern Ireland, and claim them as benefits of the Union. It was forced to intervene in the economy to accommodate a restructuring of capital in Ulster, rather than from a desire to redistribute wealth or bring about a socialist type of government. Their main concern was to maintain Unionist unity, and this was done fairly successfully up until the early 1970's. As can be seen from Table 2, the 1969 election showed signs of increasing discontent, with independent Unionists gaining nineteen per cent of the vote. Nevertheless, the Unionist Party in 1969 was still by far the largest Party in Ulster and had enough seats (sixty-nine per cent of total) in Stormont to maintain control. But by 1973, the Unionist Party had fallen apart with the emergence of other loyalist/Unionist Parties enjoying a relatively large degree of

electoral success. Between 1969 and 1973, the contradictions already inherent within the Party were exposed by the events of these years, causing the Unionists to fragment. The reasons behind the fragmentation will be discussed in the forthcoming chapters.

Conclusion

Thus, the Ulster Unionist Party was never a centrally organised united block. Structurally, the Party was very desperate with many different power centres. This type of organisation was necessary to maintain the class alliance of all Unionists to impose central directives and a single Party line on all issues would have caused friction between class interests and between the central and local Party. The Unionist Party had a localised structure as Ulster was largely a locally run state, enabling different Unionist interests to dominate in different local conditions. This type of arrangement worked very well until the 1960's, enabling a desperate Party to dominate Ulster's political life for almost fifty years.

In sum, the Unionist Party represented "an unhappy and unholy alliance of people thrown together by what they were fundamentally opposed to (ie a United Ireland) rather than by an positive or co-operative principles". (Arthur:1980:65). This worked fine in a localised state; but by 1973, Ulster was directly ruled by Westminster and the traditional local economic, social and political arrangements had broken down. The Unionist Party from the 1950's on was forced to implement policies that would create divisions and expose contradictions. Many of these contradictions were inherent and many divisions created before the events of the 1969-1973 period; but it took the events of this period to transform these divisions and contradict-

ions into political cleavages. It is the creation of these divisions and exposing of these contradictions within the Unionist Party with which the rest of this paper will be dealing.

CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC POLICIES

regulate the economy. However the decline in Ulster's traditional industries of shipbuilding, agriculture and linen, forced the government, even in the 1950's to take a number of measures to combat this decline and encourage new industries to re-locate in Ulster.

Between 1945 and 1953 Stormont introduced a series of "Industries Development Acts" which empowered the Ministry of Commerce to lease modern factory premises, and provide financial assistance to new industries, as well as expanding old ones. Plus there were the "Re-equipment of Industry Acts" of 1951 and 1953. Thes e provided grants to meet one-third of re-equipment and modernisation costs; these measures particularly helped the ageing linen industry. Furthermore there were the "Capital Grants to Industry Acts" 1954-62, which provided annual grants for growth and expansion; as well as local authorities still being able to provide rates exemptions at their own discretion which many of them did. (Probert:1978:69).

In addition, the Stormont regime set up a number of agricultural boards to maintain prices, such as the Pig Marketing Board in 1954, the Milk Marketing Board in 1955 and the Seed Potato Marketing Board in 1961. In fact, during this period the Unionist government seemed to be doing more to help the farmers' than that of the British government. (Wallace:1971:131-132).

This amount of economic activity and interventions was remarkable for a government that had previously been noted for its lack of economic concern and single issue image. It was not a question of Brookeborough and the Party establishment wanting to get involved in economics; it was a case of having to; primarily to maintain Party unity. With the recession of the 1950's in Northern Ireland, unemployment reached eleven per cent it was even affecting Protestant workers as well; when in 1960

8,000 were laid off from the Shipyard the result of this was that Protestant working class voters increasingly turned to the Northern Ireland Labour Party and other independent labour candidates. By the 1962 Stormont elections, labour polled thirty-two per cent of the total vote (though only four seats). Even Brookeborough realised that the government would have to intervene in the economy to maintain working class support, it seemed the mere existence of the Ulster Unionist Labour Association would no longer suffice. (O'Dowd, Rolston and Tomlinson 1980:12-13).

On the other hand what this type of policy meant was that Northern Ireland was penetrated by British and foreign capital. The new investors were large companies like ICI, Du Pont, British Enkalon (all producers of synethic textiles), General Foods, Marks and Spencers, GEC, ITT, Goodyear, Nestles, Ford, BP, Tenneco, Textron (see Fortune Magazine, 1977) etc, none of which were part of the traditional Unionist structure or interested in sustaining an anti-Catholic policy; thus maintaining a broad Unionist Alliance. (Bell 1976:123). In fact the expansion of foreign investment meant that Catholics now had more access to managerial occupations, which in turn, contributed to a growth of a reformist Catholic middle-class, who wanted to exercise full political rights within the state.

The state intervention of the Unionist economy led, in the long term, to the decline of Ulster's regional economy and increasing integration into a world economy dominated by monopoly capital, which created severe strain within Unionists. These strains were already apparent in the 1930's with the local bourgeoisie suffering from the depression; but it had been kept together by playing the Orange Card and emphasising the external threat of Irish nationalism. After the temporary boost of the War years, the hegemony of Ulster's bourgeoisie was

further weakened by these economic changes over which it had little control; changes encouraged by a government and Party they had always supported. These changes and economic measures were enough to stop any further labour based challenge to the Unionist Party (at least for the time being); but only increased local petty bourgeois distrust of the central Party and Party leadership in the form of the Stormont government. (Probert:1978:78).

The effect of the internationalisation at capital accumulation has been to integrate Ulster (and for that matter the Republic of Ireland) into a dependent relationship with international capital within the political framework of the European community. An example of the amount of foreign capital that was being invested in Northern Ireland in the period can be seen by the fact that throughout the 1950's only ten per cent of the new state assisted factories and plants resulted from local investment and initiative. When and where local investment did occur, it came monthly from the long-established and traditional industries. Such as tobacco, linen and mechanical engineering concerns, rather than firms. (O'Dowd, Rolston and Tomlinson 1980:37).

Nevertheless, this is not to say the process was one of complete invasion and take-over of the Northern Irish economy. The influence of the pattern of capital accumulation was predicated in the North via a weak British economy and a powerful local bourgeoisie capable of fighting a strong rear-guard action against the erosion of its economic ascendancy. It was the local bourgeoisie which controlled the local Unionist Party in the constitutency associations, yet their own Party at the centre was increasingly passing acts and creating economic policies that were against their own local economic interests. This created tensions within the Party which were to be execerbated later on. But the Party as a whole could hardly not accept this penetration of foreign capital, if it

did not want to keep the support of the working classes, who were essential to maintain Unionist hegemony. (Smyth 1980:49).

Economic and Physical Planning

To ensure a successful transformation of the economy and a comprehensive economic policy, it was necessary for the Unionist government to engage in Province-wide planning and regulation. Already, during the 1950's, Northern Ireland had been subject to such a process via British Regional Policy and central planning, and this had caused some concern amongst local Unionist. An example of this can be seen by looking at the "Statistics of Trade Act", 1956, which was passed at Westminster and presented to Stormont to pass in the exact same form. It seemed fairly obvious that if statistics were to be collected for the United Kingdom as a whole, then Northern Ireland must conform. But Unionist backbenchers at Stormont made the Unionist government withdraw the Bill, and amend as many of the original provisions as it could without making the Bill substantially different from that introduced at Westminster. The Bill was opposed on the grounds that it smacked of socialism and such statistics were the precursor of nationalisation; yet another attempt of centralisation of economic power. (Harbinson:120).

However, it was under the premiership of Terence O'Neill that economic planning and the building of an infrastructure suitable to the new type of investment really got under way. As soon as he became Prime Minister in 1963 he commissioned a number of economic reports, the most important of which being the Mathhew Report "Belfast Regional Survey and Plan" (Cmd 451, Belfast 1963). It came out against the traditional concentration of industry and population in and around Belfast and recommended a greater dispersement of industry and employment throughout Northern

Ireland. The central thesis of the report was to attract new industries not simply by offering lavish grants, which was the previous strategy, but also by creating a modern economic infrastructure, via creating a series of new growth centres, motorway and road building, increased harbour facilities, expansion of airport facilities, even the building of a second University. This report in effect became the blueprint of the government's economic policy, marking the beginning of what has been called "New Technocratic Unionism". (Buckland 1981:110).

The Unionist government accepted the Mathhew Strategy, as endorsed in the White Paper on "the Administration of Town and Country Planning in Northern Ireland". (Cmd 456, Belfast 1964). This set out to lay the foundations of an administration with major reorganisation of the machinery of government with effect from January 1st, 1965. The main changes was the setting up of a new Ministry of Development with a specific purpose of improving the physical infrastructure of Northern Ireland and a new Ministry of Health and Local Government to be ultimately responsible for all planning powers and duties and rationalise the many government activities in this field. However, the transition was not a smooth one, as local authorities were reluctant to lose their planning powers and they did their best to delay the transfer of power. In fact, the issue was not resolved until 1970, when under pressure from the British government to make reforms, the review body on local government stated that all planning powers be rested directly in the Ministry of Development. (Wallace 1970:140-141).

This new technocratic aspect of what has been dubbed "O'Neillism" was not one voluntarily embarked upon by the Unionist government. Undoubtedly, O'Neill, as near to being a Social Democrat as one could probably find within the Unionist Party saw this type of change as

beneficial to Ulster, a process which would help to eradicate sectarianism at the local level. However, with increased economic dependance on the United Kingdom and foreign capital it meant that the North's economic autonomy was severely circumscribed and economic policy had to follow the general lines of regional development policy pursued in Great Britain; especially so after the election of a labour government in 1964. Thus this new emphasising on physical and economic planning in the 1960's was adopted partly due to British regional policy and partly due to the Treasury's refusal to countenance the continued subsidisation of Northern Ireland's traditional industries. (See the Hall Report, "Economy of Northern Ireland: Report of Joint Working Committee, Cmd 446, Belfast 1962).

The results of this economic planning and reports were embodied in the Wilson Plan of 1965 (Economic Development in Northern Ireland Cmd 479, Belfast 1965), which was an actual five year plan to put through the preceding recommendations, specifically focusing on house building and job creating, related to development of new towns as alternative economic growth centres to Belfast, such as Antrim and Craigavon. In addition to this an Ulster Transport Authority was set up to run national road freight and travel services as well as a Railway Board to co-ordinate cross-border rail travel with Eire. In addition, the Unionist government in August 1964, recognised the autonomous Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and this in turn enabled the establishment of an employer-labour-government economic advisory council.

O'Neill and his government succeeded in combating the NILP by basically co-opting their reformist strategies. Whilst this involved taking away power from the local Unionist machine via increasing centralisation, it

did not really change the political form of the state. This new emphasis was necessary to maintain Party unity as banging the sectarian drum was no longer enough, or practical. On the other hand this new stress was not at the expense of sectarianism. No initiative, whatsoever, was taken by O'Neill to reform the political superstructure ie the state itself, or to intervene in community relations, (apart from visiting a few Nuns, etc). In essence, economic expansion left the character of certain state apparatuses intact. The Unionist government made many economic changes, many of which brought some benefits to some Catholics. But O'Neill could not go beyond what he had done plus superficial political overtures. Already the economic planning had political consequences in that it had taken away powers of local Unionists in terms of patronage over job allocations, allocation of resources etc. O'Neill was not in a position politically to push for political reforms, and this allowed the problems which were to appear later on in the 1960's and early 1970's. (Bew, Gibbon and Patterson:1981:156).

O'Neill and his government were still firm Unionists and upholders of partition, seeking to maintain Unionist ascendancy through the transformation of the economy at the centre (ie Stormont) and changing the tone if not the nature of government. O'Neillism was thus intended to put a new face on Ulster Unionism without jeopardising its control of the North. But by actually planning to accommodate the monopoly and large capital O'Neill alienated much petty bourgeois support. As can be see in this period by the rise of Paisley, with his jibes at "Big House Unionism", who articulated the vaguely felt resentment of the small Protestant shopkeeper, merchant, businessman etc. (Farrell:1976:234). O'Neill's unemployed policies are a specific example of how the Unionists tried to update industry and maintain Protestant domination.

Unemployment Policies

One of the main aims of the Wilson Plan was to reduce unemployment in Ulster, running at around eleven per cent in the early 1960's, by attracting new modern industry to replace the sectors where employment was contracting. Part of the strategy of the Wilson Plan was to create new growth centres away from the Greater Belfast Region to counter the uneven development within Ulster. The further away one travels from Belfast in a westerly direction the more rural and less prosperous becomes the surrounding area.

The target set in the Wilson Plan was to create 30,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector, 5,000 in construction and 30,000 in the service industries. (Probert:1978:82). Government's role in the creation of these jobs was vast, via the increased role of planning an economic infrastructure and direct assistance. For instance, in 1961 government sponsored employed some twenty-five per cent of all manufacturing employees, but 1972 the corresponding figure was forty-four point nine per cent. However, despite these measures employment in Ulster's manufacturing industry continued to decline, from 206,000 in 1950 to 166,000 in 1973. The government did create 29,000 jobs in manufacturing by 1970 but it was hardly enough to replace the amount that were lost. (Buckland:1981:113). It was the tremendous expansion of employment in the servive sector that helped offset this decline. (Probert:1978:69-70).

There is some disagreement upon the equity of this direct government employment policy. Rose reports an attitude survey conducted in 1968, in which sixty-nine per cent of public employees interviewed were Protestant, whereas they made up about sixty-six per cent of the population. This he suggests indicated that there was no great

aggregate discriminations in public employment. (Rose:1971:297). This argument is also backed by authors like the economist Simpson, who adds that of all the employment projects set up or aided by the state, sixty-six per cent were located in the Greater Belfast region, which contained sixty-eight per cent of the unemployment; but thirty-three per cent were located West of the River Bann (ie the Catholic part of Ulster) which contained thirty-two per cent of the unemployed. He suggests that this indicates that Catholics were gaining fair access to the new jobs being created. (Simpson:1983:104).

On the other hand, there is much evidence to suggest otherwise. Wright points out that of all the new jobs created between 1963 and 1691, seventy-one per cent were located within the Greater Belfast Region, an area which contained seventy-five per cent of all Ulster's Protestants. (Wright:1973:268). Thus it seems that O'Neill was tyring to combat the potential political disruption caused by the restructuring of the economy by making sure most jobs went to the Protestant working class. This is backed up by the New town strategy where all new towns bar one were located east of the Bann, and most of them were in Protestant Ulster, not more than twenty-thirty miles from Belfast. In addition many of these new jobs were created within traditional industries, just increased specialisation, helping the skilled Protestant worker. Leaving Catholics to enter as unskilled labourers in construction, or for the increasing amount of educated Catholics, jobs within the service industries. (Probert: 1978:70).

Thus, while the O'Neill administration could argue that the original economic imbalance between the east and west Protestant and Catholics was none of their doing, their development policies did little to

remedy the situation. It seems that they were clearly used to maintain working class loyalty to the Unionists. (Farrell:1976:232); (O'Dowd et al:1980:56).

However, despite some dispute about the equity of the Unionist employment policies (and the evidence does seem to suggest that they were used to the benefits of the Protestants) the important thing is that again it is another, more specific, example of how the local Unionists were loosing control to the centre. The increasing controls over the allocation of many top jobs of the centre meant a weakening of the canvassing technique of jobs allocation at the local level, thus reducing the ability of the local Unionist elite to distribute patronage and reinforce their economic dominance amongst their own exclusively Protestant clique. (O'Dowd et al:1980:19). This is not to overstate their loss of economic status, for as has been seen many jobs still went to Protestants. What alienated many middle-class Protestants was loss of much political power and freedom to manoeuvre, seemingly at the benefit of the Catholics, though this in reality seemed of only a marginal benefit. But it is the symbolic loss which seems important (Wright:1973) as well as the continuing centralisation process, eroding Orange clientalism and the highly decentralised local authority system upon which local Unionist power was built. (O'Dowd et al:1980:97).

Conclusion

It was at the local level rather than at the central level that Protestant/Unionist solidarity was most powerfully reinforced, through a close alliance of local Protestant capital, the Unionist constituency associations, local government and the Orange Order.

Central government located at Stormont originally was concerned with co-ordinating all Unionist political activity and articulating the arguments for maintaining the Union. It was primarily during the 1950's and 1960's that major structural changes occurred in the Ulster economy, and the broader Anglo-Irish framework which partly began to undermine the logic of partition but more importantly the consonance of interests upon which the Unionist state and Party was based.

With the penetration of foreign capital and the necessity of economic planning in the post-war capitalist state, the "North" needed to be rationalised (Bell:1977:24). This was reflected in O'Neillism. His policies were designed to bring about the new "technocratic" Unionism, able to cope with the problems of organising a complex industrialised modern state. The leadership of the Unionist regime was forced by the need to restructure capital and provide employment for their working class supporters to intervene in the economy, work out central plans and take much economic power out of the hands of local Unionists and centralise that power. On the other hand these types of policies undermined the local Unionist power structures and took away local autonomy over allocation and distribution of economic resources. A most obvious example was the breakdown of the local patronage system; local Unionist no longer had such control as previously over economic resources. This alientated much middle-class support in the country, as it was they who were losing power to central government and economic planners, as agents of international capital. (Probert:1978:75).

Technocratic Unionism assured a non-sectarian front, with O'Neill hopeing that a successful economic policy would also attract Catholic electoral support. If this was the case, as many Protestants feared it was, then the Unionist Party would no longer be exclusively

Protestant, or 'their' Party, a change that many Orangemen would not welcome. (Rose:1971:99). However, O'Neill realised this and was not prepared to go all out for Catholic support, allowing many economic policies to be co-opted for the benefit of the Protestant working class, thus maintaining their essential support. An example of this can be seen in Unionist job creation projects. As Smyth states: "the bureaucratic rationality of the planners came into conflict with the political reality of the Stormont state". (Smyth:1980:48).

This was to create problems for the Unionist Party later on. Not only had increased economic intervention by the Unionist regime alienated its local membership via loss of the latters power, but the Party was still maintaining its sectarian position - it had to ensure Protestant working class support in face of the NILP challenge. To use the increasing amount of resources it had at its disposal largely to the exclusion of Catholics was a dangerous policy on the part of the Unionist regime. The Unionist government had little latitude for economic maneouvre. It had to continue its interventionist and centralising course, yet at the same time was committed to the entrenched politics of sectarianism to ensure continued Protestant working class support, which was essential to remain politically dominant. "Unionism was caught in an inexorable vice". (Smyth:1980: 50).

This is not to suggest that Stormont's economic policies caused the Party to split, but it did create division; specifically between the increasingly centralised leadership and the local Party. As a result of the transformation of capital in Ulster, the former gained power, whilst the latter was losing it. Stormont's accommodation of foreign capital meant that the growth sectors in Ulster's economy, were no longer

owned by Ulster capital nor necessarily controlled by local bourgeoisie. Stormont's economic policies may have helped the Protestant working class (marginally!) but the same could hardly be said for the Unionist middle-class. Even traditional industries like shipbuilding were being taken over by the British government. This situation created a small but growing middle-class whose incomes and status were not related to the old Unionist oligarcy. They were appointed either by central government or directors of foreign capital, more on the basis of skill and professional competancy (the fact that there were more Protestant skilled and professional workers, than there were Catholic, is beside the point). These people did not have to join the Orange Order to get to know local businessmen, their livihoods did not depend on it. (Probert:1978:75).

What O'Neill's economic policies did was expose contradictions between local Unionist interests and the interests of larger capital as represented by the Unionists at Stormont. The Unionists at Stormont were forced to brainstorm the economic nature of Ulster, yet their power was based upon the support of all Protestants. When their economic policies militated against the interests and power of local middle-class Unionists, the basic reason for the Unionist state partly collapsed. If a Unionist Party in control of Stormont was not going to protect local Unionist economic interests what was the point of continuing to support the Unionist Party as it stood? The exposure of this contradiction was hardly enough to split the Party, but it did create tensions and create conditions that would much facilitate the rise of Paisley and Craig, both of whom had much petty-bourgeois support and took independent stands against the British government and the rise of foreign capital. (Harbinson:1973:74 or Protestant Telegraph July 1977).

The Unionist Party at the local level did not face their first challenge from Civil Rights Marchers, but rather from economic planners and foreign capital, who took away their power over land use, allocation of some jobs and housing. (O'Dowd et al:1980:42). At the height of the internal crisis in Unionism between 1965 and 1973, it was significant that the only resolution on the Party's Conference agenda opposing the leadership was concerned with the procedures and effects of planning directives. (Harbinson:1973:58).

CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL POLICIES

As an integral part of the United Kingdom Northern Ireland could not remain impervious to what was happening in post-war Britain. There had been elected a new reformist Labour government to Westminster committed to setting up a Welfare State, with free (ie socialised) medical care, secondary education for all, large public housing projects, old age and sickness pensions, unemployment benefit, child and mother support etc. Northern Ireland's Unionist government at Stormont, had no choice but to implement these reforms. Despite the fact that many Unionists disliked what to them was the thin end of the wedge of socialism they had to accept these policies, based upon the principle of parity. The Ulster people pay the same taxes as the British, therefore they receive the same services as the rest of the British people. The problem with these reforms was that they were difficult to use discriminately, ie, for the benefits of Protestants and exclusion of Catholics. On the whole a large proportion of the Catholic population as well as many Protestants did benefit from welfare and education reforms.

However, the overall effect of these policies was "imperceptibly at first, to undermine the political structures of the Unionist State and its relationship to the rest of the United Kingdom". (O'Dowd et al: 1980:203). Direct policies sent from Westminster increasingly demoted the role of Stormont to that of an agent of British social democracy, whilst increasingly taking power over welfare, health and education away from the local authorities, and at the same time increasingly integrating Catholics into the State's daily activity. This type of policy again put further strains upon the unity of the Party by further erosion of local power, breaking down Orange clientalism and the local Unionist overseeing of Catholic segregation. This breakdown of the logic of the Unionist Party's existence was

further execerbated by opposition to Catholic integration by traditional anti-Catholic Unionists and those who were anti-socialist. (Darby:1977:86). This chapter will examine the specific effect of some of these social policies and how they created further strains within Unionism.

Welfare Policies

In 1946, the Stormont and Westminster governments lay down parity of services and taxation as the guiding principle of financial relations between Northern Ireland and Great Britain. This committed the Unionist government to implement and organise any national welfare policies that Westminster introduced. In return for this benefit of being British and therefore receiving British services, the people of Ulster were subject to all British taxes. In fact, this worked out well for Northern Ireland as they received greater benefits from British Social Services than they could ever have hoped for if they were relying totally upon their own tax base. It was through local government that the prime responsibility for the implementation of welfare policies lay. In 1945, local government in Ulster raised forty-two per cent of its own revenue to pay for all the services it provided, yet by 1960 this figure stood at twenty-five per cent. (O'Dowd et al:1980:103). Again, this is a case of declining local autonomy viz-a-viz Westminster, and the increasing power of Stormont to allocate funds. The Unionists might enjoy the benefits of being British, but it also meant that if the British were paying most of the expenses they would have a greater say on where and how the money was spent. It was not necessarily a question of the local Unionists loosingpower, but not gaining any. It was the central state that was increasingly making decisions affecting the everyday life of its

citizens. With the creation of a National Health Service, unemployment benefits etc, a whole new era of state intervention and state power had been created, a development Unionists had little control over. They were forced to give health, unemployment, sickness and old age benefits to Protestant and Catholic alike, the power concerning who should receive what was out of the hands of local Unionists, it had been decided at Westminster. The local state was being delocalised, and the contradictions this created for local Unionist Party control and unity were to become apparent when the ultimate authority of Westminster was increasingly exercised.

This process of binding and centralisation was specified in various agreements throughout the late 1940's. In 1948, the Unemployment Funds of Britain and Northern Ireland were virtually amalgamated. In effect, this made the Westminster government pay for the rapidly expanding benefits for unemployment, sickness, maternity, widowhood, orphanhood, retirement and death. The Social Services Agreements of 1949 made Britain pay most of the costs of National Assistance programmes, family allowances, non-contributory pensions and the new National Health Service. (Buckland:1981:86-87).

The consequent expansion and improvement of services was not without difficulties. The Unionists were as determined as possible, to maintain the Protestant nature of Ulster. The best example of this is the Mater hospital affair. The Mater was a Catholic hospital which wanted to retain its Catholic identity by using Nuns as aides and retaining its Catholic teaching facility. However, the Minister of Health in Ulster in 1948, William Grant, refused to incorporate the Mater into the National Health Service as a Catholic hospital, as it would have been electorally very unpopular, despite the fact that in

Britain Catholic hospitals were incorporated into the state service. Consequently, the Mater had to operate independently and lost much state aid. Terrence O'Neill, when he became Prime Minster, tried to incorporate the Mater, however, it was again dropped due to backbench opposition, and the issue was not resolved until direct rule in 1973. (Wallace:1970:112-115). Thus, despite the principle of parity, the Unionists were prepared to change some aspects of Britain's policies to placate the hardlines. The Mater affair gives some indication on how many Unionists felt about Catholics receiving social benefits from their government. Nevertheless, Northern Ireland was fully integrated into the Welfare State. The Unionist Party were not slow in taking full credit for the resulting benefits despite the fact that many Unionists resented the benefits received by Catholics and the increased state intervention, resulting in a decline of local power. Initially, Welfare legislation did help to strengthen the Unionist Party's hand and reinforce partition, by maintaining the gap in living standards between Ulster and the Irish Republic. It made many Catholics less determined in their willingness to unite with the south. An indication of this may be seen by the failure of the IRA border campaign between 1956-62. (Probert:1978:77).

Whilst the Catholic population had rejected unification through violence; turning instead to Nationalist and Republican political Parties, little was done to incorporate Catholics into the machinery of the state. In fact the state's one-sided nature became even more pronounced as Northern Ireland failed to follow Britain in implementing one man, one vote and abolishing property qualifications for voting and University seats. Darby, Rose and others argue that with the advent of Welfare reforms, the Catholic population would soon want to have a say in the government which increasingly affects

their lives. (Darby:1976:86). Before the war communities were largely insular, both Protestant and Catholic, with people relying heavily on the Church, friends and relatives for most needs. With Welfarism this largely changed, Catholics could no longer ignore government as they came into daily contact with it whether at the unemployment exchange, hospital etc.

However, the Unionist Party was not using Welfarism in a liberal-democratic form. A lot of the allocation of resources was out of local government and Stormont's hands, and put in the hands of Westminster and 'rational' bureaucrats; but even this was resisted by back-bend Unionists in Stormont. In 1957, Westminster introduced a Bill for Child Support giving a small sum for the first child, yet larger sums of money for each subsequent child. When this Bill was sent to Stormont to be passed, back-benders tried to amend it with the effect that the first child would receive the larger amount of support, and subsequent children lesser amounts. This, of course, would discriminate against the larger Catholic families. The Minister of Health however, was unable to accept this, mainly because of pressure from Westminster bureaucrats and politicans, and the Bill was forced through unchanged. (Harbinson:1973). This is another example of local Unionists using Welfare specifically to the benefits of Protestants, and again they were thwarted by the bureaucrats and Westminster.

What is important to understand is that much power in decision making and the allocation of resources was decentralised in Northern Ireland. Local government was the key to the daily administration of society even in Welfare State, with county boards responsible for health and welfare. This gave them much leeway in taking social democratic

policies as exemplified by Welfarism, and adapting them to their indigenous sectarian practices. (See Devlin 1969 for discrimination in qualifying for welfare payments during the 1950's). Increasingly, local councils found this power taken away from them, causing a disruption between the Party leadership and Party at large. At the same time, the Welfare State reduced the pressure to emigrate and shielded many Catholics from the privation of the system which helped contribute to more Catholics wanting to work within the system. (Probert:1978:114).

Education

The Butler Education Acts, passed in Britain in 1944, were subsequently reproduced in the Northern Irish Education Act of 1947. This broadly followed the British models in establishing a tri-partite system of education (though on a continued Catholic-Protestant basis) plus providing free higher education for those who deemed 'able'. This led to a fundamental change in the social profile of the Catholic population, by greatly increasing the number of young people who went on to higher education. By 1960 lower middle-class and working class Catholics found in possible to obtain higher education through the new system of grants and allowances, as a means of independent support.

In education the problem of discrimination was skirted in that Protestants went to fully maintained state schools to which the state contributed sixty-five per cent of the cost for building and running, plus free items such as transport, meals, milk etc. (Wallace: 1971: 107). Again this worked for the benefit of the Protestants, and confirmed the notion of a'Protestant State for a Protestant people' contributing to the ideological unity of the Unionist class alliance.

At the same time a contradictory process was continuing, ie the emergence of a new educated professional middle-class who had gone to University, again got away from the influence of the church and had been affected by the state and its apparatuses. Increasingly there were Catholics who would no longer accept the political and to some extent economic anomalies of Northern Ireland.

At the same time there was a growing contradiction between the administration of education and the financing of it. By the mid-1960's, education accounted for forty per cent of total local authority expenditure whilst the Ministry of Education provided seventy-five per cent of all education costs. "Local government was caught in a double trap. Autonomy was undermined, as local taxation declined, and further weakened by the fact that expenditure of the dwindling local revenue was increasingly directed by Stormont especially in education". (O'Dowd et al:1980:104-105). Once more local Unionists were loosing power to the centre via the demands of a modern industrial State.

Housing

The question of housing in Northern Ireland was, and still is, delicate, especially with carefully drawn electoral boundaries to facilitate gerrymandering that existed until the early 1970's. The wrong siting and allocation of housing in a city such as Londonderry could have caused a change in the political control of the city from Unionist to Nationalist. Housing is another example of how power was taken away from local authorities and placed in centralised hands, in the face of Unionist attempts to use it to maintain unity and dominance.

In 1944, a Housing Commission concluded that 100,000 houses were immediately needed, and that a complete programme of slum clearance and the ending of overcrowding would require at least 200,000 houses. This was in a country that at the time had only 323,000 houses. (Wallace:1971:144). Obviously local authorities were not interested in providing public housing. In fact up until the Second World War they had only built 1,700 houses, concentrating instead in giving subsidies to private builders (ie Unionists). (O'Dowd et al:1980:120). To remedy this the Housing Act (NI), 1944, provided for the payment of lump sum subsidies to local authorities erecting houses. While a subsequent Housing Act of 1945 set up the Northern Ireland Housing Trust, a public authority empowered to erect houses throughout Northern Ireland. Its role being to supplement the effort of local authorities. By the end of 1969, the total of post-war housing built was 176,086. These included 66,828 dwellings built by local authorities; 42,160 by the Northern Ireland Housing Trust (NIHT) and 55,167 by private enterprise with subsidies. (Wallace:1971:145).

However, it seems that the NIHT had little effect in upsetting Unionist balances. Local councils were the planning authorities, and the NIHT actually helped to reproduce segregation. In addition, between 1960-71, seventy-four per cent of all housing constructed was built within the environ of Belfast. This seems in accord with the Wilson Plan, and seems to have been used to house Protestant workers who were moved out to their new places of work. (O'Dowd et al:1980: 125). At the same time housing was allocated not necessarily on the basis of need, but on the basis of politics. It must be remembered that in Ulster one had to be a tenent to vote in the Stormont elections, them it was essential for the Unionists to make sure any

new Catholic tenents would be housed in electoral wards that were already considered as 'unwinable'. Indeed, the Mayor of Londonderry, always a Unionist, had personal power over the allocation of houses, and this power was used effectively to maintain a Unionist controlled council where the majority of electors voted nationalist; 10,274 Unionist voters to 20,102 anti-Unionist voters in 1966. (De Paor: 1970:158).

Housing policies were directly used to maintain Unionist hegemony as seen by practices in Londonderry and the specific case of Dungannon, wehre 194 houses were built by the local authorities in 1965. All these houses were built in the Unionist East Ward, and every one allocated to a Protestant; including a single Protestant teenager; despite the fact that there were homeless Catholic families. (Darby: 1977:74-75). Whilst in the short term this was feasible, it could not be continued; times had literally changed. (See Bew, Gibbon and Patterson:1979). Increasingly Catholics were being brought into contact with the State, and systematically excluded (at least in terms of housing) from its workings and benefits. Indeed, it was housing and local government control over that was one of the early starting points for the Civil Rights Movement. O'Neill's failure and inability to extend his new Unionism to housing showed that to do so would mean undermining Unionist strength and unity. Yet in the long run the Unionist Party had to change to a new system, as seen by the establishment of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive in 1971, with full responsibility for all public housing building and allocation, and run by British or British appointed civil servants, based on a 'points' system. Once again centralised control took away power from the local Unionists as the centralised Party did not have

the political will (or sense!) to do so. (O'Dowd et al:17).

Conclusion

As can be seen the Unionist Party struggled to annex the benefits created by the new emphasis on welfare policy, in order to preserve the political status quo. This annexation was largely successful until the late 1960's. But it did cause intra-Unionist tension as local Unionists increasingly saw their power taken away from them. In face of this annexation, Unionists were increasingly faced with Catholic discontent with Unionist attempts at trying to exclude them from housing, education and welfare. However, Welfarism and other social policies were responsible for the increased integration of the Catholic community into the Northern Irish State. The logical development of which would be political integration to ensure they got the full benefits they were entitled to. (Probert:1978:77).

The Unionists could not afford to allow full Catholic participation, as it would have destroyed their class alliance of Protestants. As a result politics would take an un-parliamentary twist, and it would be left to Britain to force through the necessary changes, finally shattering the Unionist Party. Not only were the local Unionist bourgeoisie lamenting their slow loss of power (as seen by the increase in popularity of Paisley in the 1960's), but, as Wright points out, once the Unionists were increasingly forced to implement policies in a social Democratic manner, or they were taken out of their hands completely, many working class Protestants began to feel betrayed that despite thier loyalty to the Unionist Party, Catholics were increasingly getting the same benefits they were. (Wright:1975: 276).

O'Neill's attempts at 'building bridges' with the Catholic community were just for show and largely superficial measures, not really going too far beyond visiting the odd Catholic school and shaking hands with Nuns. The boast of Lord Craigavon, the Northern Irish Prime Minister in 1934 , that "all I boast is that we are a Protestant Parliament for a Protestant State". (Bell:1978:40). Still held more or less true throughout the post-war period until the late 1960's. It was the inability of the Unionist Party and government to conform to a social democratic model, as the economic and social changes demanded, that led to it in effect becoming outdated as a governing agent. The Unionist Party was exclusively a Protestant Party trying to organise a Protestant state; yet they were increasingly forced by the British to integrate Catholics into that state. As can be seen in housing policies, the Unionists fought very well to exclude Catholics from the full and proper allocation of public housing despite the fact that they were being largely built by money from Westminster for allocation by need. This contradication was to be successfully exploited at a later date by the Civil Rights Movement. This integration of Catholics into the state undermined the Protestant nature of Ulster, creating a crisis within Unionism. A Protestant Unionist Party could not be expected to run a state that extended benefits to Catholics yet this is what was happening. In addition the rationalisation and centralisation of social services undermined local Unionist power. The Unionist Party was localised with its branches having much autonomy. The social and economic changes in Northern Ireland leading to centralisation of power and Catholic integration took away not only the Unionist Party raison d'etre, but also undermined its local structure destroying Orange clientalism and middle-class political power. (Probert:1978:77). The social and economic conditions of

Northern Ireland were changing, but the Unionist Party was not. The contradiction between the complex, centralised interdependent state and the autonomous, localised Party designed to run it, was the basic contradiction that forced the Party apart. Nevertheless, it took the political events of the late 1960's and early 1970's to bring that contradiction to the fore and make the British realise that the Unionist Party was incapable of ruling Ulster in a social Democratic manner.

CHAPTER 5

CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE LAW AND ORDER PROBLEM

Throughout the 1960's and even into the early 1970's much of the Catholic community, and even a few liberal Protestants, were United behind the call of Civil Rights. The Catholics wanted to become politically involved in the state that had such a great effect over their lives. These demands for reforms were met with deaf ears within the Unionist Party and by violence outside of it. The threat of Civil Rights was a new one to the Unionists, they knew how to cope with the odd IRA 'terrorist', but not peaceful demonstrations asking for rights, which in the rest of the United Kingdom seemed only reasonable and fair.

The issue of Civil Rights was one the Unionist Party was unable to deal with, lest it bring itself down. Increasingly, the Stormont government found itself caught between the ever growing militancy of the Civil Rights campaigners and the hardliners of its own Party, who had already lost much of its power at the local level. The reaction of the Unionist state was one of contradiction; forced reform and repression. It was the failure of the Unionists to cope with the increasing violence that led to the collapse of Stormont, and the forcing through of reforms that brought intra-Unionist tensions fully out into at least public view.

The Civil Rights Movement

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) was formed in January 1967, their main aims being 'one man, one vote', the ending of gerrymandering, the setting up of machinery to prevent discrimination by public authorities and to deal with complaints over unfair allocation of public housing, the repeal of the Special Powers Act (allowing any suspect to be held for seven days without being charged)

disbanding of the 'B' Specials, the exclusively Protestant Reserve Police force. (Flackes:1980:94). Obviously despite Terence O'Neill's promises of 'extending the hand of friendship' and 'building bridges' with the Catholic community, Catholics were still discriminated against.

The rise of this new Catholic activism was due to a number of factors already mentioned, such as the increasing marginal integration of Catholics into the state via economic and social changes; plus the rise of a newly educated reformist minded Catholic middle-class. Many leaders of the movement such as Bernadette Devlin, Eammon McCann and Paddy Agnew were all university trained Catholics, and now they were demanding the same rights as other British citizens and using acceptable methods (in Britain at least) to air and protest about their grievances. Bew, Gibbon and Patterson also point out two other factors that helped to raise Catholic consciousness and make them more willing to believe they might gain through playing the constitutional game. The first, is the Labour victory of 1964 and the setting up of a 'campaign for Democracy in Ulster' amongst Labour MP's. Another factor is the Nationalist Party taking the role of official opposition between 1966-68. (Bew, Gibbon and Patterson:1979:168;9).

Up until the Civil Rights Campaign, the Catholics of Ulster had actually achieved very little in the way of concrete reforms. As Rose points out despite O'Neill's overtures of friendship, "toleration is not to be confused with integration". (Rose:1971:100). At no time did the Prime Minister encourage the appointment of Catholics to prominent positions in the regime, let alone the Unionist Party. An integration of Catholics into the state and its apparatuses largely came about through the policies of the British government and the need to

restructure the economy. O'Neill realised that to go further would only antagonise the Party in the country even more. What O'Neill was after was not full integration of Catholics, but rather an acceptance of the legitimacy of the Stormont regime and the Constitution. (Rose:1971:97).

The Civil Rights Campaign presented a new type of challenge to the Unionists. They were not arguing about the existence of the state of Northern Ireland. There were no demands for reunification, or power sharing or community government, only immediate gains within a United Kingdom context such as jobs, houses and voting rights. The demands of the Civil Rights Movement were essentially a logical extension of continuing economic and social change. (Probert:1978:95). However, the novel challenge presented by the Civil Rights Movement led to divisions amongst Unionists about how to respond to this extra parliamentary; through non-violent, challenge.

Throughout 1967 and 1968, the NICRA held and organised marches throughout Ulster to highlight discrimination in housing, employment and political rights, publicising the situation of Ulster Catholic's around the rest of the world. As long as the marches and demonstrations remained peaceful O'Neill was under no great pressure to accede to their demands. With the pushing of the British government, O'Neill had promised to abolish the business vote in 1966; but as of mid-1968, he had not done it. In fact, O'Neill was under greater pressure from Unionists, both in and outside of the Party not to accede to any demands put by the Civil Rights Movement. O'Neill was all too aware that he could accomplish no major political change without the Unionists support, both in and out of the Party. (Hastings:1970:58).

Reform

Unionists saw Civil Rights as a step towards reunification, and their reformist demands were immediately defined as a threat to the Unionist state, not just by the local security forces (whose powers were threatened by their demands) but also by much of the Protestant working class, who saw their marginal privileges under attack. Indeed, many Unionists saw the NICRA campaign as nothing else but a front for the IRA. Even though individual IRA members were involved, by no means did they have a controlling voice within the movement. The whole affair was largely independent of the IRA. (Flackes:1980:16).

In October 1968, the NICRA applied to the hardliner Home Secretary William Craig for permission to hold a march in Londonderry. Craig, who saw the Civil Rights Movement as an IRA front, refused permission (O'Neill was not informed). Nevertheless, the organisers went ahead with the march, and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) tried to forcefully stop it; the result, a major riot. The specific result of this riot was that in November 1968, O'Neill announced a package of reforms designed to mediate the tense situation in Londonderry and take the sting out of the whole Civil Rights campaign. Londonderry was to be run by a commissioner, thus taking power (to discriminate) out of the hands of the local Unionists. The Special Power Act was to be 'looked into'. The multiple (business)vote was to be abolished, and housing authorities "encouraged to base allocations on a points system. (Buckland:1981:124).

For many this package was "too little, too late". (Farrell:1976:248). Its effect was largely to outrage many loyalists without really satisfying the Civil Rights Movement. The whole campaign began to centre around 'one man, one vote'. O'Neill would not and could not

concede it - it would have jeopardised his position within the Party; but, on the other hand, the Civil Rights Movement would not have been satisfied without it. The reaction of the RUC to the Londonderry march, and that of Craig revealed that the demands of the Civil Rights Movement could not be achieved through agitation and piecemeal legislation. To accede would put severe strains on the Unionist alliance and require much restructuring of the state apparatuses. (Probert:1978:95).

The significance of the 1968 reforms, and any more that might occur lies in the effect it had on traditional reations within the broader Unionist politics machine. The Unionist cabinet were able to see the necessity of at least limited reforms, but these reforms further threatened to undermine the basis of traditional Unionist solidarity by challenging even more the power of the local Party associations and local government. O'Neill might be able to control the cabinet, but the Unionist Party as a whole was a large and cumbersome organisation, with many MP's aware of the power of their own constituency associations. Most Unionist seats were safe seats in the sense that the Unionist candidate was usually returned unopposed. The real selection process occurred before the election, and the local association had the power to make things very difficult for an MP if he should take an independent stand. It was precisely at the local level that reforms were most unwelcome. On the other hand, many were aware that it was the labour government at Westminster who was putting pressure on O'Neill to introduce reforms "with possible sanctions that, if it were not carried out locally, it might be by Westminster intervention". (Wright:1973:271). Evidence of disagreement within the Party came when O'Neill sacked Craig for his continued criticism of the reforms.

In January 1969, O'Neill established the Macrory Commission to review local government hoping to ease the pressure from the Civil Rights Movement and Westminster; but the government was openly struggling with contradictory pressures surrounding the reorganisation of local government. Firstly, there were the "demands of economic and physical problems and civil servants for technocratic efficiency in the administration of local services, demands which had triggered the reform proposals initially". (O'Dowd et al:1980:110). On the other hand, the Unionist Party at all levels had to be reassured that reorganisation would not involve a significant erosion of Protestant/ Unionist power. Thus the proposals, when published by the Macrory Commission in 1970, still left housing under the control of local authorities, plus there was little done to redeem the injustice of gerrymandering, bar suggesting to wait for future local government reorganisation under consideration for the United Kingdom as a whole. (Wallace:1971:54).

In the meantime, O'Neill called an election in February 1969 to challenge his loyalist critics. Many local constituency associations chose candidates who were decidedly anti-O'Neill and anti-reform. Nevertheless O'Neill did win the election despite having a sizeable number of MP's within his own Party who had definitely came out against any reform. With this William Craig formed the Vanguard Movement within the Party and this increasingly served as a focus for the hardliners. At the same time, there was an increasingly right-wing Unionist threat in the form of Paisley's Protestant Unionist Party (PUP), which received a respectable nineteen per cent of the vote in the 1969 election. (Laver:1976:26).

By March 1969, the power struggle within the parliamentary Unionist

Party was quite clear. On the one side were O'Neill and his followers who were in favour of a reform programme designed to remove the more obvious Catholic grievances; backed (pushed) by Westminster. On the other side were Craig and his followers, who felt that any concessions to the Catholic minority could only lead to a weakening of the constitutional position. (Harbinson:1973:153). O'Neill realised that the traditional repressive strategies were no longer possible given the British government's support for the reform programme. For O'Neill it was question of how far the Unionist Party could take the reform programme without destroying the basis of its own power within Northern Ireland any further. (Probert:1978:101).

O'Neill was quickly loosing the support of his Party, especially the local Party machine as represented by the UUC. So in April 1969, he resigned before Craig could get organised enough for a take-over. This smoothed the path for another moderate to take over as Prime Minister, James Chichester-Clark. As the new leader of the Party Chichester-Clark could do little but carry on and try and push for reforms. This was not at all popular amongst Unionists, but he was selected leader by the parliamentary Party out of a desire for Party unity rather than reform. (Rose:1971:104).

The failure of the initial reform package to placate the Catholics was enough proof for many Protestants that the IRA was behind it, and reform should go no further. A sign of discontent within Unionism showed when Paisley won O'Neill's old seat in Stormont, Bannside in April 1970 and the Westminster constituency of North Antrim in the following June, on a platform of more local control, especially over security and an end to reform. (Buckland:1981:149). In addition there were many organisations springing up not controlled or linked to

the Unionist Party, such as the Ulster Constitution Defence Committee, Ulster Protestant Volunteers; and there had even been a resurection of the old Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) who in 1969 violently expressed their opposition to reform by setting of a number of explosions.

On 12 August 1969, the Apprentice Boys of Londonderry had their annual march through the city to celebrate the lifting of the seige of the Catholic James II, by William, Prince of Orange. Tens of thousands of Protestants attended to demonstrate their support for the Protestant way of life that seemed to be threatened by recent events. The August 1969 celebrations turned into Catholic/Protestant rioting, and the RUC and the Ulster Special Constabulary (USC or 'B' Specials) were called out to intervene. What in fact happened was that the police. being exclusively Protestant, approximately ninety-six per cent (O'Dowd et al:1970:179), and many members of the Orange Order (parent organisation of the Apprentice Boys), attacked the Catholics and forced them back into their ghettos; specifically the Bogside, fifty hours of heavy rioting broke out and it spread across the whole of Northern Ireland. The police, being Protestant throughout the whole of Ulster, went on the rampage through Catholic ghettos, especially in Belfast, using such crowd control equipment as heavy Browning sub-machine guns, armoured cars and CS gas. There can be little doubt that the police escalated the situation and saw any type of Catholic demonstration or protest as a threat to the security of Ulster. (Hillyard:1978:121).

Nevertheless the result of this rioting was that the British army was called in to maintain peace on the streets, and the GOC was put in charge of all of Ulster's security and law and order control. The

army under Westminster's control was more trusted by the Catholics and was obviously less partisan in its approach to Catholic/Protestant rioting. In addition, the Unionists themselves realised they could no longer handle the situation; they were unable to cope with this direct challenge for Civil Rights and responded in the traditional manner which no longer worked. (Buckland:1981:131).

Not only was the British Army put on the streets, the Wilson government forced Chichester-Clark to disband the USC, disarm the RUC and institute one man, one vote. Thus many of the aims of the NICRA were finally met, after much rioting and bloodshed.

The Problem of Law and Order

The final attainment of the most important demands of the NICRA became of secondary importance to many. The situtation had gone beyond reform for many Catholics; they were not going to be defenceless if Protestant's attacked again and local IRA units began to re-arm themselves. By the same token many Protestants were in a state of discontent. As Wright points out "It seemed to them that nobody cares about the ordinary Protestant, while everybody is bending over backwards to give everything to the Fenians (catholics)". (Wright:1973: 75). For many Protestants the fact that Catholics had broken the law to gain reforms (though it can be argued they had little choice) showed that if they wanted to stop any further (ie nationalist) demands, they to would have to resist by force. Their dissatifaction is seen in the fact that it was they, throughout the latter part of 1969 and 1970, who were carrying out most of the rioting, burning out Catholics, even killing the first RUC man on the Shankill Road, In response to IRA re-arming, Protestants set up local defence

associations for similar reasons. It is interesting to note that the Shankhill Defense Association was originally set up in April 1969, not primarily for armed defense, but to resist Belfast's Corporation's redevelopment plans as put forward in the Wilson PLan. This was another indication of working class Unionist dissatisfaction with technocratice Unionism at the central level. (Buckland:1981:128).

Many Protestants were increasingly redefining the Civil Rights Movement and Catholic resistance as a problem of law and order. It did not take the Catholics long to realise that the British Army were there as much to control the Catholics as to protect them and it was not long before they were fighting the army, setting up "No-Go Areas" where they effectively ruled themselves. The existence of "No-Go Areas" infuriated many Unionists, who more and more saw James Chichester-Clark as weak and the Unionist Party unable to maintain control over security. As has already been pointed out, this can be seen by the mushrooming of Protestant paramilitaries and the election of Paisley to a formly safe Unionist seat in Bannside in June 1970. Paisley's main platform here was "mainly concerned with law and order issues; he called for more effective policing of Catholic areas and urged the re-arming of the police and the recall of the USC .....". (Wallace:1972:76). Also in the same month, William Beatty won another seat in South Londonderry for Paisley's newly formed Protestant Unionist Party on a similar platform. Obviously the Unionist Party was facing a critical challenge, with many Unionists wanting tougher security arrangements ie go into the Catholics areas and flush out all the troublemakers.

This resistance to change and a demand for a crackdown on the IRA manifested itself again within the Party not only through Vanguard,

but also the West Ulster Unionist Council set up after the August 1969 riots. This was based in the West, especially around the border areas and apart from demanding tougher security measures was outright in its opposition of the proposed reorganisation of local government, which threatened to take away local Unionist control of authorities in most of the west.

Throughout 1970, dissent was building up within the Party. In March, five MP's Craig, West, Boal, McQuade and Laird were expelled from the parlimentary Party for not supporting a vote of confidence in the government's security policy. In April the Party's annual conference voted against the government's decision to set up the Northern Ireland Housing Executive which took over complete control of housing. (Farrell:1976:271-2).

At Westminster a new Tory government had been returned and Reginald Maulding, the new British Home Secretary, visited Belfast and gave the go-ahead for tougher law and order policies. The first consequence of them was in July 1970 when the Carminal Justice (Temporary Provisions) Bill was rushed through Stormont bringing in a mandatory six-month minimum prison term for rioting. In effect, it was used mainly against Catholics, which only pushed them nearer to the reorganised Provisional IRA. In August, Chichester-Clark replaced a resigning moderate with John Taylor a leading right-winger as Minister of Home Affairs, who later on summarised his policy for dealing with Catholics then. "We are going to shoot it out with them. It is as simple as that". (The Times of London: February 5:1971).

Despite these measures, Chichester-Clark realised that it was not enough to maintain complete Party unity. Chichester-Clark concerned with

keeping his Party united had no choice but to try and conciliate hardline Unionists. The appearance of Protestant MP's outside the Party ranks reduced the amount of support that he could afford to loose within his diminished ranks and still remain Prime Minister. As such Chichester-Clark wanted to go for "saturation by security forces of areas which he considered were dominated by the IRA". (Flackes:1980:91). However, the British government was unwilling to offer the amount of troops needed; so in protest in March 1971 he resigned.

The struggle for leadership now centered on law and order. This was the one area of policy in which Unionists looked for leadership which would suppress subversive (ie republican) elements in society and so make a greater contribution to the retention of the Union than any other. "A Unionist leader who could not contain the anti-Union forces outside as well as inside Parliament would never command the respect of the Party". (Harbinson:1973:153). It was Brian Faulkner, a long-time hardliner, who became leader of the Unionist Party and thus the Prime Minister. Faulkner immediately launched a new tough security campaign, culminating in August 1971, with the introduction of internment, that is, detention and imprisonment without trial. This policy, carried out with the backing of the Westminster government, proved a serious miscalculation in terms of improving law and order. Firstly, it completed the alienation of Catholics from the Stormont/ Unionist regime. Secondly, because of the indiscriminate nature of internment, the Provisionals gained much support, who were in fact not greatly affected by internment. The main result of internment was that the violence got worse. Deaths due to the violence before internment were thirty for that year, and it rose to one hundred and forty-three, after internment for the rest of 1971. (Flackes:1980:210).

Despite its failure as a law and order measure internment did provide some measure of unity within the Party. Many were satisfied that it was least a step in the right direction, Faulkner succeeded in retaining much confidence of the Party. However, it was still not enough for some and in September 1971, Boal and McQuade resigned from the Unionist Party and joined with Paisley and Beatty to form the Democratic Unionist Party, in essence just another name for the Protestant Unionist Party. This again provided pressure from without the Unionist Party to step up on the security measures. Faulkner had little choice but to maintain a heavy RUC/army presence on the streets and continue internment, just to maintain full Party unity. This is turn increased support for the IRA, which in turn increased support for the Protestant paramilitaries. It has been pointed out that in this period there were about forty-six Protestant paramilitary organisations from the UDA claiming a membership of 60,000 in late 1971 (Farrell:1976:297) through to the UVF, Ulster Freedom Fighters, Red Hand Commandoes, Protestant Action Force, Tara, and a whole host of what simply amounted to tartan gangs. Many acts of Protestant violence occurred without central direction. Many working class Protestants were (are) prepared to take the initiative in their own community to defend their way of life, if they feared that official security forces were not strong enough in defense of their regime. In the situation of near civil war the Unionist Party was unable to control most of their working class support, and consequently the Party (Faulkner) was forced to try and outdo them. (Rose:1976: 154).

Increasingly, the toll of deaths and bad publicity for Unionist policies got Westminster worried; they saw that the Unionists could not cope with the situation. The final straw for the British

government came in January 1972 when paratroopers shot dead thirteen unarmed civilians at an illegal Civil Rights march in Londonderry; this along with the increasing failure of Faulkner's law and order campaign forced Westminster to take a fresh look at their role within the situation. A reappraisal which would eventually lead to Direct Rule.

Conclusion

The issue of Civil Rights and its developing into a wider security problem was one which finally brought the latest divisions within the Party out into the open. Already local Unionists were concerned about erosion of power and autonomy via increased centralisation and planning, along with social reforms. These same policies increased the liklihood of Catholic expectations and desires for corresponding political changes, changes which even O'Neill was not prepared to implement for fear that they would bring Unionist differences out into the open, which in fact did happen. Dissension and disunity did occur, as powerful and determined elements worked desparately against compromise and concessions to the Catholics. O'Neill could live with the Paisleyites, but when the reform package of 1969 failed it led to increasing dissatisfaction within the Unionist Party which became steadily more divided, with no one section in real control. The leadership though strong, had little control over constitutencies etc. (Buckland:1981:126).

The Civil Rights campaign presented a novel challenge to the Unionists - British citizens demanding British rights. These demands had to be met, yet the Unionist Party was not the vehicle to carry out the demands; it was not designed to. As long as Catholics looked

towards Dublin and refrained from politics in Northern Ireland, the Unionist Party could contain its dissension and retain control; but economic and social changes created divisions and brought many Catholics into politics. Thus the Unionist Party responded in the only way it knew how: treat all threats to their monopoly of power as a IRA/republican/nationalist plot. The attempts of the Unionist Party to secure unity via a tough law and order campaign, instead led to instability, violence and Unionist infighting. The Unionist Party could hardly control their own police force, their working class supporters were taking things into their own hands and were forming paramilitaries and out on the streets implementing their own form of Unionism. The total collapse of law and order, and the Unionist Party's inability to cope with the situation finally brought in Direct Rule and it was this which provided the final straw in breaking up the Unionist Party.

CHAPTER 6

DIRECT RULE AND THE WHITE PAPER

British Invervention Prior to Direct Rule

The British government had played an important role in Ulster's affairs since the rise of the Civil Rights Movement. Previously, they had an indirect affect through welfare and social policies, along with economic planning and regulation. After August 1969, Westminster took a more direct interest. They had troops out on the streets for security. They applied behind the scenes pressure to press for reform. They sent English civil servants over to keep an eye on things like housing allocations, plus economic and physical planners to work out where houses and jobs should be located. O'Neill recognised the importance of the British government in his resignation in March 1969. "Ulster is not a rich, powerful, independent state, but a part of the United Kingdom committed to United Kingdom standards and subject in the last resort to United Kingdom authority. We must go forward, for British public and parliamentary opinion would not tolerate our going back". (O'Neill: 1969:201). This sentiment was echoed many times by British politicans prior to Direct Rule and warnings of it were often given by Paisley. (Wallace:1971:172).

It was becoming increasingly clear that relations between Stormont and Westminster were changing considerably, and that a number of important political decisions were being taken out of the hands of the Unionists by referring them to joint working parties. This meant that the Unionist government had little room to maneouvre within any recommendations made. All of this was a traumatic experience for the Unionist Party at large. British politicans saw nothing wrong with Ulster that could not be cured by a good strong dose of social-democratic type reforms. Faulkner was prepared to accept many

reforms, but he was not going to be pushed out of leadership for being too weak in face of Catholic demands. But "little did he realise that the more secure he made his position in the Unionist Party, the less secure and credible he became in the eyes of the British government". (Harbinson:1973:160). Efforts to secure unity of the Party, made the regime as a whole less stable.

Direct Rule

The British were committed to reform in Ulster, yet backing up a government which resisted it. It became clear that only Westminster could resolve the political impasse; and because of the size of the gulf between the Unionists (already in disarray) and the opposition in Ulster, the only logical step the British could take was to impose Direct Rule. This step-by-step approach by the British in the taking over of Stormont's responsibilities and its logical conclusion was seen by Craig, who, in February 1972, issued a statement on behalf of the Vanguard movement saying that they were dedicated to the maintenance of the Northern Irish parliament, the restoration to that Parliament of full internal security and a rejection of any move towards a United Ireland. (Harbinson:1973:163). The Unionist Party's raison d'etre rested on the fact that theirs was a locally controlled state, and any moves which eroded/finished this local control, eroded the unity of the Party and reasons for its existence.

In March 1972, Brian Faulkner along with his Deputy Prime Minister Ted Heath and other members of the Cabinet, to discuss the worsening security problem. At this meeting Heath asked for internment to be phased out, for complete control of security, including the RUC and reserve, and the assumption by Whitehall of responsibility for law and

order, including control of courts, appointments to the bench, prisons and penal institutions, special powers and public prosecutions. (Harbinson:1973:164). Faulkner and Andrews returned to Belfast to consult their Cabinet. Only a week before Unionist backbenchers had voted to oppose any reduction in Stormont's power; so their reaction was obviously a negative one. Faulkner returned to Heath to say that his demands were unacceptable, at which point Heath announced that Stormont would be prorogued and Northern Ireland run by a Secretary of State (as a member of the Westminster Cabinet).

Even moderate Unionists were horrified at the suspension of Stormont, so long regarded as their security against a United Ireland. Stormont was seen as a guarantee against any possible attempts of being sold out by the British. The loyalist response can be seen in the fact that the Protestant paramilitaries stepped up their military efforts after Direct Rule, even fighting British troops. (Buckland:1981:163). It became clear that, for some Unionists, their first loyalty was to maintain Stormont (ie oppose Direct Rule), rather than the United Kingdom government. (Wright:1973:236). However, as O'Dowd points out Stormont had already lost many of its functions (politically), the Unionist Party being increasingly supplanted by the bureaucracy whether at Whitehall or Stormont; and Direct Rule was the logical conclusion for an on-going process. (O'Dowd et al:1980:204).

One of the first things the British achieved was a temporary truce with the IRA. The Unionists were alarmed that they were going to be sold out into a United Ireland, even more so that as soon as their Parliament is suspended, the British government sit down and have talks with the IRA. The Unionist Party, for the first time in fifty years, had no control over the affairs of Northern Ireland. No

longer was it enough for the Party to emphasise the need to maintain the Union; for the first time it was forced to ask within what context and what form would it take. It was this question of what form a future Northern Irish government should take that finally broke an already divided Party.

The 1973 White Paper

The British government were willing to consider a devolved government within Ulster, they did not want to leave a political vacum, it only encouraged support for the paramilitaries. Besides, they did not really want long-term responsibility for the overall governing of Ulster; if a political solution could be worked out, it meant that British troops could be withdrawn. As a result the British government issued a White Paper in March 1973, outlining its proposals for the future government of Northern Ireland.

It scheduled elections, based upon proportional representation, in June 1973 for a Northern Irish Assembly. However, this was not going to be a resurection of a Stormont-type system. The Stormont parliament and government were to be replaced by the Assembly and an Executive. The Executive would be appointed from the Assembly, but it could no longer be "solely based upon any single Party, if that Party draws its support and its elected representation entirely from one section of the community". (Farrell:1976:306). In other words, the Unionist Party would have to share power with the major Catholic/ Nationalist Party - the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). It also called for a Council of Ireland, linking the Ulster and Dublin governments, thereby institutionalising the "Irish dimension". (Laver:1976:13). In addition there would continue to be a Secretary

of State for Northern Ireland at Westminster and all power over security would still be reserved to Westminster.

The Party finally fragmented over this White Paper. Faulkner was largely resigned to accept it, realising that a strong sectarian Stormont would never return and that power-sharing (at least) would have to be accepted. Paisley's DUP of course rejected it totally, which for his Party paid off as it gained fourteen per cent of all council seats and control of Ballymena in the May local elections. The Anti-White Paper Unionists accepted the authority of Westminster, believing that Ulster's future could only be guaranteed by a strong Stormont (Unionist dominated) with control over security. Led by Harry West, these broke away from the Official Unionist's (those led by Faulkner) in March 1973, just after the publication of the White Paper.

At the same time Craig formed his Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party (VUPP) which rejected the right of the British government to change the constitution of Northern Ireland and would call for a Unilateral Declaration of Independance (UDI) if necessary. There was also the West Belfast Loyalist Coalition, which held the same position as the VUPP; but as it was mainly organised UDA/UVF organised, it was distrustful of the established politicans (Whyte:1983:224). This led to the situation in which "for the first time in its history the Unionist Party (led by Faulkner, and now with the prefix-Official) was led into an election in which they could not hope to win an absolute majority, and were forced to campaign for a share of the Protestant vote". (Laver:1976:13).

Thus the Protestants of Ulster were forced to decide upon the type of Unionism they wanted. Previously, they had little choice and, were

on the whole relatively content with a strong devolved local and regional government. From the election results (see Table No 2 Chapter 2) it seems that a substantial proportion (forty-eight per cent) of Unionists accepted the fact that power-sharing and Westminster's right to alter the constitution was a valid one. However, the majority of Unionists (fifty-two per cent) rejected the notion of at least power-sharing, and a further twenty-one per cent rejected Westminster's right to alter Ulster's constitution. The impasse reached is still not solved, the British government were (are) de facto rulers in Ulster, they have troops on the streets to maintain an acceptable level of security whilst they pass all the laws relating to Northern Ireland. Nevertheless the Assembly (and subsequent Assemblies) failed not only due to Catholic hostility but just as much due to Protestant hostility. The Unionists were divided but as divided Unionists they were still strong. (Buckland:1981:166).

Conclusion

The British government was instrumental in the fragmentation of the Ulster Unionist Party, but the British had little choice, they had to push ahead with reforms to prevent all out civil war and further national and international outcry. Reforming under a Unionist government depended on two mutually exclusive conditions. First, they had to maintain credibility in the eyes of the Catholic minority; and second they had to preserve the government's power base amongst the loyalist masses. With Westminster induced reforms, it seemed as though the latter was sacrificed to the former. (Probert:1980:133). The British government realised that as long as Stormont in its old form remained in tact, the Unionists would unite electorally to retain control and therefore never need to worry too much about the

Catholics (politically), causing greater civil unrest.

Faulkner was forced to maintain unity via policies of what amounted to repression. It maintained Unionist unity (even if it was fragile) but it did not solve any of Ulster's problems concerning reform and security. The British government had to emasculate the Stormont regime to such an extent that it became merely an administration unit. When the Unionist Party refused to accept this the British had little choice but to bring in Direct Rule. British policy since 1969 was based on the assumption that the Westminster government is itself a 'neutral' force, because it is outside the traditional enmities of Ulster. However, this is not correct. Catholics do not identify at all with Britain, traditionally seen as an enemy. The Protestants, for their part, anxious that they were being sold out, after a continuing erosion of their local autonomy and economic power, the political process became complete. (Rose:1976:73).

The British government were totally unaware of the role they were playing and the effect it would have upon Unionism. For them it was a simple matter of using British troops to keep the warring factions apart, and a process of pushing the Unionist Party to make reforms to establish a social-democratic type state. What they didn't realise was that every reform undermined the very existence of the Unionist Party. When the Unionist Party resisted, the British government's logic dictated that they must take over. But they were taking control in a state where there was no consenses over what form a new constitution should take. (Probert:1978:101).

Over the years, Unionist power became neutralised, first locally at a political economic level when they no longer retained full control over the allocation of local authority resources. With the rise of

Civil Rights and the law and order problem, British policy was one of effectively neutralising Stormont. British bureaucrats were brought to oversee public job allocation, on education boards etc. Persons appointed were generally those considered 'non-political', with some technical/professional qualifications such as lawyers, docters, businessmen, Trade Unionists etc. (Rose:1976:72).

British intervention only completed a process in political terms that had been occurring, previously at economic and social levl. Increasingly decisions were being centralised and put in the hands of technocrats/bureaucrats. The Unionist Party as a loosely organised autunomous organisation became extinct. Their functions were taken over by the modern social-democratic state and their accompanying professionals, managers and bureaucrats who are "geared up to govern", changing their techniques to match the needs of late twentieth century capitalism. (Cockburn:1977:Chapter 1). The Unionist Party, as it was, was no longer "geared up to govern". In the long run it failed to reproduce the sectarian divisions and maintain control. As a consequence it became increasingly inecessary for British intervention to ensure the state did not collapse, at the same time undermining an already and increasingly fragile Unionist Party.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The Unionist Party, quite obviously was not the monolithic political block of "O'Neillism", the Party leadership worked hard to maintain the political unity of all Unionists within the one political Party. It is also clear that the Unionist Party was unable to cope with the new economic and social forces coming into play in the post-war era. Welfarism, economic planning and regulation, state intervention in the economy eclipse of local capital and the rise of foreign/ multi-national capital and investments were all part of a process occurring or had occurred in most of Western Europe within this period. However, the Northern Irish state did not fit into the social-democratic model. When these policies were applied to Northern Ireland, the state as a sectarian state could not accommodate them, as it meant the integration of Catholics, and extending them benefits. The Unionist Party, as a sectarian Party and guardian of the Stormont regime was also unable to accommodate to this change and act as its agent. As a consequence, the Party simply divided; adjusting to the new situation which they faced. The divisions within Unionism did not become highly visible until after 1969, but it is clear that the process of fragmentation had been going on much longer.

No one policy can be pointed at and identified as the main determinant of the fragmentation of the Unionist Party. The Unionist Party was inherently a wide coalition of interests, working class, reformers, non-reformers. Consequently, the Party had to be loosely organised and have much local autuonomy to allow dominant interests in each area to take control and run affairs according to local interests. The Unionist Party could maintain unity and retain control because the Protestants knew that if they stood behind it, the Party would ensure the Union would be maintained because of the level of devolved power which existed. They knew the Unionist Party would

keep Catholics out of political and economic life, thus removing any fears they have had about being threatened by Republican competition.

The Party itself did not finally break up until 1973 over political differences, but it is arguable that these differences over what form a new devolved government should take might have been overcome, or even avoided, if it were not for the preceeding economic and social changes in Ulster. Previously the Ulster industrialists had used the Orange Ideology and Protestant Supremacy to establish the Northern State and ensure local capitalist domination. After the Second World War most Ulster based industries all but disappeared, becoming integrated into the wider British/International market, and with this integration many reasons for the state (hence the Unionist Party) disappeared. But Orangeism and Protestant supremacy remained at most levels - and now they were themselves virtually the reason for the existence of the state: "to dismantle Protestant supremacy would be to dismantle the state itself." (Farrell:1976:329). The Unionists resisted stubbornly, any further erosion of local autonomy that would undermine their very existence.

The Unionists realised that they could not fully resist their economic integration nor British Welfarism, but they tried to adapt this change to the Northern Irish situation. The structural determination and reproduction of classes in that social formation involve ideological and political processes as well as economic/social ones. It is fundamental to understand the nature of the dialectical relationship between the political and ideological institution of Ulster and the underlying economic/social structure. The Unionist Party was the agent trying to synthesise the dislocation between the economic base and the political/ideological superstructure. Thus conflict within

the economic region could not be revealed through the "reform" (change) of that region without the equally significant "reform" (change) of the political/ideological superstructures. The failure of the Unionist Party to do this, to manage this change within the Northern Irish conflict, eventually led to the downfall of the state and the break-up of the Party. The mobilisation of class interests over economic issues (eg by the working class over improved housing and job opportunities and by some sections of the bourgeorise over the need for the rationalisation and centralisation of Economic planning) inevitably undermined certains aspects of traditional Unionism and the Unionist Party. The situation is further complicated by the fact that there has been little secularisation of ideology, and religious modes of thought continue to offset profoundly the economic and political struggles as well as being affected by them; thus we see the rise of Paisley with his religion emphasis. (Probert:1980:115).

After 1945 new forms of capital accumulation (ie internationally) and the emergence of a reformist social democratic state in Britain began, imperceptibly at first, to undermine the political structures of the Unionist state and its relationship to the rest of the United Kingdom. Northern Ireland was affected by the expansion of the British state apparatus required for its growing intervention in restructing capital and in developing welfare state services. These processes of change "took place against a background of a semi-autonomous local state which attempted to integrate these changes into its own ramshackle political structure. This forces Britain to act as an agent for international capital and embark upon a policy of intervention designed to transform the Social Structure". (Smyth:1980:51). Stromont came to function more directly as an agent of the British state by implementing welfare reforms and directly encouraging the restructuring of the local economy.

Consequences for the Unionist Part were two-fold. Firstly, the highly decentralised local authority system - based largely upon Orangeclientalism and exclusion of Catholics from political life - was gradually undermined by the centralising forces of British Social Democracy operating through Stormont. Secondly, the Unionist Party was ill-equipped to oversee an increasingly complex and interventionist state apparatus. As an agent to accommodate the clash between economic/social change and the political/ideological status quo, the Unionist Party was a failure; it could not do it; it was not designed too though it gave a good attempt. Its oligarhical leadership was internally divided on a whole range of issues such as state intervention in the economy, welfarism, relationships to British (and Irish) government, concessions to Catholics and the management of Protestant working class disaffection over unemployment. While the Unionist working class supporters favoured state intervention in many areas, they did not necessarily want to see the resultant benefits extended to Catholics. However, though Catholics may have only benefitted marginally from the restructuring of the economy there is no doubt that they were better off due to welfare reforms. This was a contradiction for the Unionist Party as a Protestant Party for a Protestant people; they were at the same time extending benefits to the Catholics. The problem for the Unionist Party was now to accommodate the increased integration of Catholics into Ulster's society, yet maintain political hegemony.

Given its structure and internal divisions, the Unionist Party as such was unable to come to terms with the challenges presented by the state interventionism in the new socio-economic circumstances of the 1960's. The Stormont bureaucracy, as an agent of the British state (supported by elements within the Unionist cabinet), was increasingly coming to

supplant the Unionist Party as the political organiser of the tension-ridden Protestant class alliance. It was the planners, bureaucrats, technocrats, professionals, etc who gained in the 1960's at the expense of the local interests. The local Party was no longer in a position to deliver to its supporters. It was increasingly left to professionals to allocate resources, with the Protestants still gaining a large share, but it still divided the Party as they were loosing power. (O'Dowd et al:1970-204).

However, the Unionist Party still constituted the Protestant alliance in one key area - control of the local law and order apparatus, local power still prevailed in this region. Their control over the police and security created problems for the Unionist Party when local authorities were condoning the battering of Civil Rights demonstrators by their own RUC. It was the collapse of local "law and order" which finally undermined the political insulation of Northern Ireland from Westminster and forced the central state to assert its ultimate constitutional responsibility. This widened the gap between the Unionist Party as a whole and the Stormont state apparatus, leading to "the fragmentation of the former and pressures to restructure the latter." (O'Dowd et al:1980:16).

Thus the economic/social base in Ulster was altered, forcing through a painful change in the political superstructure that took much bloodshed. Political change that could only be completed by Westminster as the Unionist Party was not organised/willing to do it. Even under British pressure/intervention political change was slow to come. What the restructuring of the economy, social policies and British intervention did was, in effect, "neutralise" government by taking power away from the Unionists and placing it in the hands of

professional experts, thus not giving Catholics a real share in power, and taking it away from the Unionists, (Rose:1971:23) creating a political crisis within the Party that led to fragmentation.

However, it was not enough for economic/social changes to split the Party. As Laver points out "the constitutional future of the Province is the major issue". (Laver:1976:21). When the British government wanted to change the constitutional arrangements, the Unionists could not agree on a form. As was pointed out earlier, Northern Ireland was a Protestant state for a Protestant people run by a Protestant Party. When the state was no longer to maintain its total Protestant character via increased centralisation and social policies, the Party which was designed to run and organise the state could no longer agree on how the new state should take shape; and indeed there is still disagreeement amongst Unionists upon what should be the constitutional nature (hence socio-economic nature) of Ulster, ranging from total integration with the United Kingdom put forward by the DUP, to a type of dominion status independence put forward by the UDA and its political counterpart. The old Unionist Party was able to agree upon the absolute necessity of the maintenance of the Union; but when it was forced to implement/react to policies which go beyond that, in both the political and socio/economic sphere, all its inherent contradictions due to being a loosely organised class alliance, came out, finally forced it it fragment.

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